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DEVELOPING IDENTITY:
EXPLORING THE HISTORY OF INDONESIAN NATIONALISM

A Thesis Presented

by

Thomas Joseph Butcher

to

The Faculty of the Graduate College

of

The University of Vermont

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Master of Arts
Specializing in History

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Abstract

This thesis examines the history of Indonesian nationalism over the course of the twentieth century. In this thesis, I argue that the country's two main political leaders of the twentieth century, Presidents Sukarno (1945-1967) and Suharto (1967-1998) manipulated nationalist ideology to enhance and extend their executive powers. The thesis begins by looking at the ways that the nationalist movement originated during the final years of the Dutch East Indies colonial period. The first section highlights how the nationalist movement was disunified in its attempts to gain political autonomy from Dutch colonial control. It moves on to talk about the impact of the Japanese occupation period (1942-1945) on the nationalist movement, detailing how Sukarno was able to unify the various nationalist groups by presenting his form of Indonesian ideology, Pancasila. The paper briefly touches on the Indonesian Revolutionary War (1945-1949) before discussing the impact of Sukarno's gradual move towards communist and anti-Western sentiments. The paper examines several speeches given by Sukarno during this period to emphasize the ways by which he directed national ideology in his favor. The narrative continues to explain the Indonesian public's backlash against communism, briefly detailing the Communist Massacre of 1965-1966 and explaining how Suharto grabbed power in the ensuing chaos. An analysis of Suharto's early speeches reveals the ways that Suharto was able to appropriate Sukarno's Pancasila to fit his own political goals. The thesis moves on to discuss the Pancasila indoctrination programs which Suharto enacts during the late 1970s and into the 1980s and how the Suharto regime became associated with repression and state violence. The thesis concludes by examining the similarities and differences between Sukarno's and Suharto's manipulation of ideology to enhance their political agendas.

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There are many people which I am indebted to for not only helping with the completion of this thesis, but for also assisting in my academic progress at large. I would like to start by thanking the many faculty within the University of Vermont's History Department who have broadened my understanding of history tremendously. I was lucky enough to have classes with Professors Sean Stillwell, Erik Esselstrom, Dona Brown, David Massell, and Sean Field as both an undergraduate and graduate student, and their classes and teaching styles had a significant impact on my understanding of historical events. As my undergraduate advisor, Professor Brown has been particularly instrumental in helping me get to where I am now. Professor Erik Esselstrom has been an excellent guide throughout my many classes with him and continued to be so during the course of the research and writing for this thesis. I am also incredibly grateful for the academic staff at the School of International Training in Kerambitan, Bali, Indonesia, particularly Dr. Ni Wayan Ariati and Pak Made, for welcoming me into their homes and first introducing me to Indonesia. I would also like to extend my gratitude to the staff at the University of Vermont's Howe Library circulation desk, where I have worked for the past three years and have always felt encouraged by. Angus Robertson and Margi Vagt were particularly reassuring during the final weeks of this writing process. I would like to thank my dearest friend Gennaro Valant for continuously being there to pep me up when needed. My parents, Diane and Tom, have provided me with endless opportunities to pursue the education of my desires and have always been supportive when I need them. And lastly, I would like to thank my partner,

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Introduction

There is certainly an argument to be made that nationalism is one of the most universal features of the modern era. Throughout the twentieth century, forms of nationalism can be identified in all corners of the world. Nationalism is associated with the rise of fascism in Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan, the independence movements in Asia and Africa, and the competition for global dominance during the Cold War. It is obvious too, that nationalism continues to impact geopolitics in the twenty-first century. Despite this universality, nationalism, by its own very nature, remains one of the most versatile ideologies. This makes it all the more important to study its history in different contexts. Indonesia is one of the greatest examples of twentieth-century nation building, yet it is far too often overlooked. The collection of islands in Southeast Asia now recognized as Indonesia was not a unified place until the twentieth century. The physical distance separating the islands, as well as the differences in cultures, religions, languages, and histories, kept the archipelago divided. Prior to the twentieth century, for example, a Balinese Hindu was not likely to encounter an Acehnese Muslim, nor would the indigenous communities of New Guinea interact with their counterparts on Sumbawa. And while there were various kingdoms and city-states, mostly located on the larger and more populated islands, there was no single entity that successfully was able to expand its reaches to the entirety of modern Indonesia. The archipelago's unification into a single state was the direct result of Dutch colonial and imperial expansion in the late nineteenth and early

twentieth centuries. Indonesia's unification and subsequent nationalism are leading examples of what Benedict Anderson has described as the "imagined community."¹

But what has kept this imagined community together? Why has Indonesia not splintered into several different nations? What were the steps taken to create a unified Indonesian state that accommodates the substantial differences of the population? How and when did people begin to see themselves as Indonesians rather than as Javanese or Balinese? One answer to these questions that this thesis hopes to expand upon is the state's national ideology: *Pancasila*. *Pancasila*, which literally translates to "five pillars" or "five principles," became the basis of the Indonesian state shortly after it was introduced by the country's first president, Sukarno. It was presented by Sukarno as the solution to the debate on whether an independent Indonesia would become a secular state or an Islamic state.

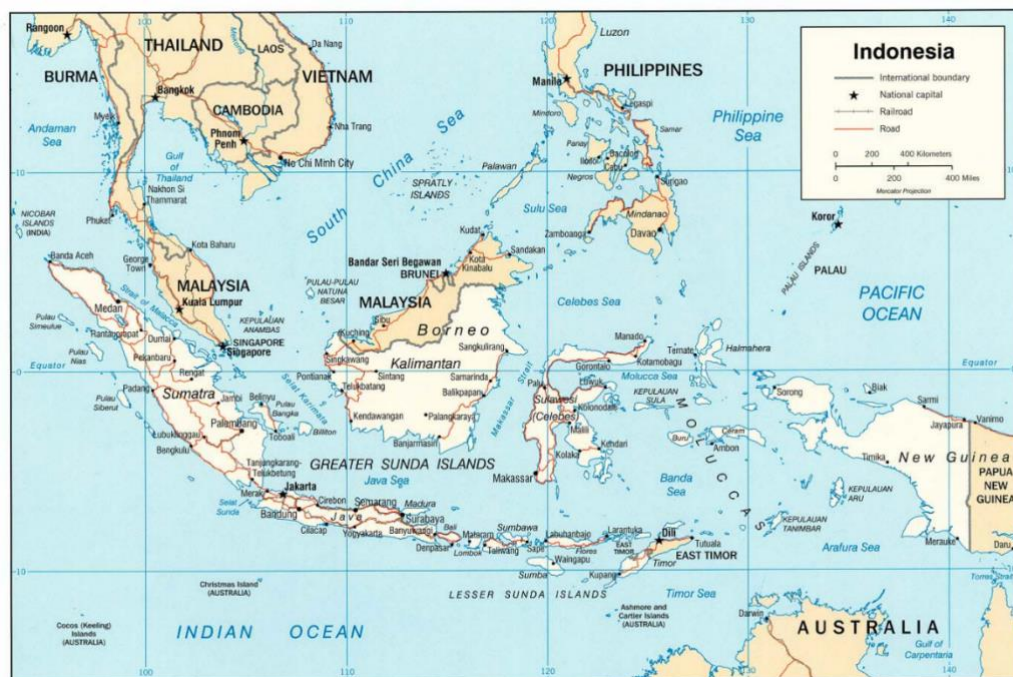


Figure 1: Map of Modern Indonesia, image courtesy of U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, "Indonesia Political Map, 2002," Perry-Castañeda Library, University of Texas Libraries, 2020, http://legacy.lib.utexas.edu/maps/middle_east_and_asia/indonesia_pol_2002.jpg.

¹ Benedict Anderson, *Imagine Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. ed. (London: Verso, 2006).

Sukarno proposed that Indonesia follow five broad principles: (1) Nationalism, (2) Humanitarianism, (3) Democracy, (4) Social Justice, and (5) Belief in One God.² These were intentionally broad principles with definitions that could be adjusted as needed to fit the needs of the state. Pancasila became the central tenant of Sukarno's administration and continues to influence Indonesians today. I first encountered *Pancasila* when studying abroad in Indonesia in 2018. The term was completely foreign to me, as it was for the twenty other American students who were a part of my program. *Pancasila* was explained to us as the basis for Indonesians' identity and was often the rationale for things that we students did not comprehend. During a month long period where we attended lectures at the University of Gadjah Mada in Yogyakarta, almost every single presenter took the time to begin with an introduction to *Pancasila*. I became increasingly interested in *Pancasila* as an ideology the more I learned and heard about it, yet many of questions on how and why it became so important for Indonesians were unanswered. This thesis developed out of many of the lingering questions I, along with my fellow students abroad, had.

Some more context is necessary on Indonesia and its history before moving forward. This may prove particularly useful for readers with little knowledge on the overall history of Indonesia. Indonesia is the largest archipelagic nation on Earth, consisting of over 1,600 islands, over 700 of which are inhabited. The archipelago was an incredibly diverse and dis-unified portion of Southeast Asia until the twentieth century. This is largely due to the geographical constraints imposed by the nature of most archipelagos. For

² Sukarno, "The Birth of Panjta Sila," in *Toward Freedom and the Dignity of Man: A Collection of Five Speeches by President Sukarno of the Republic of Indonesia* (Djakarta: Department of Foreign Affairs, 1961).

example, there are approximately 2,900 miles between Indonesia's western-most point, Aceh, and its eastern point on the island of New Guinea (see Figure 1). Thus, the islands were relatively isolated from one another and shared little in common. As Ricklefs states, "a sense of a common Indonesian identity or of common goals simply did not yet exist."³ The idea of a unified Indonesian archipelago was only established once the Dutch had finally finished their imperial conquest in 1910, and the subsequent creation of "an environment in which nationalist forces could ultimately develop" and the foundations for Indonesia's territorial extent were established.⁴ The archipelago became known as the Dutch East Indies and was under Dutch colonial rule until 1942, when the Japanese conquered the region and occupied it until the end of World War II. In August 1945, two days after Japan's official surrender, Indonesia declared its independence. What followed was a four-year-long revolutionary war against the Netherlands that resulted in independence for the new Republic of the United States of Indonesia in December 1949. Chosen to be president was the engineer turned nationalist politician and statesman, Sukarno. This first republic and the idea of federal states was quickly replaced by the Republic of Indonesia on the fifth anniversary of the declaration of independence, August 17, 1950. Sukarno remained President under this second republic as Indonesia entered full independence.

The next significant turning point in Indonesia's story took place fifteen years later on the evening of September 30, when several of Indonesia's senior army generals were

³ Merle C. Ricklefs, *A History of Modern Indonesia since C.1200*, 4th ed. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008), 179.

⁴ Ricklefs, *Modern Indonesia*, 178-179.

abducted and killed in an unsuccessful coup attempt. Following the coup, which is known to Indonesians as *Gēstapu* (from *Gērakan September Tigapuluh*, 30th September Movement), army leadership was bestowed upon Major General Suharto who quickly began to blame on the Indonesian Communist Party (*Partai Komunis Indonesia*, PKI) for the coup. What followed over the next several months was a public purging in which anti-communist activists and army personnel massacred an estimated 500,000 PKI members and sympathizers.⁵ By May 1966, Suharto and the army began to tighten their grasp on political power, forcing Sukarno to transfer full authority over the military and functioning of the government to Suharto. Sukarno was officially only President in title. These roles lasted for another ten months, until March 12, 1967, when Suharto was named President and Sukarno relieved of all titles and powers. Thus, ended what became known as the Old Order (Sukarno's reign, 1949-1967) and formally introduced the New Order (Suharto's reign, 1967-1998). This introductory context is important to understand as this paper dives deeper into Indonesian history. It is particularly essential to distinguish the differences between the New Order and the Old Order, as these terms will be used throughout this thesis.

Indonesian historiography remains a relatively small field of study in the West, and much of what has been researched is focused on the major turning points outlined above.⁶

⁵ John Roosa, *Pretext for Mass Murder: The September 30th Movement and Suharto's Coup d'État in Indonesia* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2006), 25; Geoffrey Robinson, *The Killing Season: A History of the Indonesian Massacres, 1965-1966* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018), 3.

⁶ It is worth noting that this thesis has been hindered by several limitations which have impacted the ability to obtain sources. Firstly, there are no courses on Indonesian or Southeast Asian history taught at the University of Vermont, and the University's library is quite limited in its materials pertaining to Indonesia. Additionally, the research for this thesis was conducted amidst an ongoing global pandemic which made travel to out-of-state libraries for research difficult.

The first event that gained academic attention was the Japanese occupation and Indonesia's revolution. George Kahin was the first American to seriously write on Indonesia, publishing his groundbreaking text *Nationalism and Revolution in Indonesia* in 1952.⁷ Kahin's text focuses on the evolution of nationalism from the early twentieth century to the establishment of the Republic of Indonesia in 1950. This text shows how Indonesian nationalism first developed in elite, educated circles of Indonesians living in urban areas on Indonesia's most populated island, Java. Kahin also argues that the colonial conditions for nationalist thought were originally welcoming, rather than discouraging independence. Kahin introduces Sukarno's speech presenting Pancasila, however, he lacks the historical hindsight to recognize how important the ideology became following the original address—the section on Pancasila spans just five pages out of Kahin's nearly 500 page manuscript. Yet, Kahin remains a foundational text for Indonesian history. Benedict Anderson's *Java in a Time of Revolution* is another foundational text in the field that also focuses on the revolutionary period.⁸ Compared to Kahin, Anderson is more focused on the steps taken Indonesians to achieve independence, rather than the ideological basis behind their motivation. Anderson's evaluation on the period found that the youth of Indonesia, not dissatisfied intellectuals or an oppressed working class, were responsible for the spread of nationalism during the Japanese occupation. Ethan Mark is the latest historian

⁷ George McTurnan Kahin, *Nationalism and Revolution in Indonesia* (1952; repr., Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003).

⁸ Benedict R. O'G. Anderson, *Java in a Time of Revolution: Occupation and Resistance, 1944-1946* (1972; repr., Jakarta: Equinox Publishing, 2006).

to explore Indonesia during the Japanese occupation.⁹ Mark approaches the subject by focusing on the impact of Imperial Japan's Greater Asia dogma on the nationalist leaders of the archipelago. Mark highlights the shared distaste for colonialism and the West that both sides experienced at the beginning of the occupation. Mark shows how Indonesian nationalists became dismayed by the abuses and exploits of the Japanese, leading to ideologies that diverged away from Japan. Mark believes that the experience of the occupation and Greater Asia contributed to Sukarno's desire to present Pancasila "as the preeminent symbol of Indonesian distancing from Japan."¹⁰ These three texts are useful to see how Indonesian nationalism originated in the period before independence. The second event that often gets attention from historians of Indonesia is September 30 coup and subsequent communist massacre of 1965-1966. There are still many details of the massacre that remain unknown due to the New Order's restrictions on research regarding it. However, since the fall of the New Order several historians have begun to dig into the mysteries. John Roosa and Geoffrey Robinson have both published accounts that contain painstakingly graphic details about the violence.¹¹ Both Roosa and Robinson trace the narrative of the killings in their respective texts, yet neither one of them connect the violence to nationalism and state building. This is one of the gaps that this thesis hopes to address.

⁹ Ethan Mark, *Japan's Occupation of Java in the Second World War: A Transnational History* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2018).

¹⁰ Mark, *Japan's Occupation of Java*, 300.

¹¹ Roosa, *Pretext for Mass Murder*; Robinson, *The Killing Season*.

In addition to research on the major events in Indonesian history, studies focusing on Indonesian politics are becoming more common. Douglas Ramage looks at how Pancasila was used by different politicians in the final decade of the New Order to promote their various agendas.¹² Ramage argues that Pancasila helps promote tolerance between groups with differences and disagreements. His focus is not on Suharto and the state, but on the groups that worked within the state ideology to further their goals. Ramage looks at how the country's Islamic leaders found ways to address their problems with the New Order through Pancasila ideas. R.E. Elson also reviews the ways the nationalism impacted Islam.¹³ Elson explores why Islam was unable to gain successful traction in Indonesian politics, arguing that it was because Pancasila had already been established as the country's preeminent ideology. Eka Darmaputera examines Pancasila through a cultural lens by looking at how the Indonesian public has adopted the state ideology.¹⁴ Darmaputera's study is important for understanding how the national ideology and development of the state are connected to the cultural components of Indonesian identity. Angus McIntyre gives the most attention to comparing Presidents Sukarno and Suharto in his text on Indonesian politics.¹⁵ McIntyre argues that both Sukarno and Suharto were successful, in the sense that

¹² Douglas E. Ramage, *Politics in Indonesia: Democracy, Islam and the Ideology of Tolerance* (London: Routledge, 1995).

¹³ R.E. Elson, "Nationalism, Islam, 'Secularism' and the State in Contemporary Indonesia," *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 64, no. 3 (June 2010): 328-343, accessed December 20, 2020, DOI: 10.1080/10357711003736493.

¹⁴ Eka Darmaputera, *Pancasila and the Search for Identity and Modernity in Indonesian Society* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1988).

¹⁵ Angus McIntyre, *The Indonesian Presidency: The Shift from Personal Toward Constitutional Rule* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2005).

they lasted so long in office, because of their personalities. This, according to McIntyre, is the greatest similarity between the Old Order and the New Order.

This thesis hopes to expand upon the secondary sources listed above by looking at the ways which Sukarno and Suharto used the concept of *Pancasila* to pursue nationalist aims. It argues that the country's two main political leaders of the twentieth century, Presidents Sukarno and Suharto, developed Indonesian nationalism and the state ideology, *Pancasila*, in order to establish their political dominance over the archipelago and retain power. Although the leaders had radically different politics, Sukarno being left-leaning and Suharto a right-wing authoritarian, they both relied upon *Pancasila* to push their agendas. This shows how nationalist thought can be appropriated by both political extremes. This paper argues that the two men used *Pancasila* to enhance their positions, with the ways by which they used it providing a baseline for understanding their presidencies. This thesis also shows that Sukarno used nationalism to mobilize the masses and tap into popular support, while Suharto manipulated Sukarno's ideas to contain and restrict Indonesian nationalism so that Suharto could better control it for his own purposes. This is important since *Pancasila* is still a vital part of the modern Indonesian identity and its legacy cannot be disentwined from its connections to Sukarno and Suharto. By appealing to the broad desires of the nation, particularly the desire for unity, Sukarno and Suharto were able to present themselves as the rightful leaders for the moment. This paper will examine several of the most important speeches delivered by Sukarno and Suharto to see how they presented their ideas to the Indonesian public. These speeches will show how both Presidents used nationalist rhetoric in their speeches to entice the Indonesian population into believing they were serving in the country's best interests, despite the contracting real-

life social, political, and economic conditions which Indonesian's lived in. Through these speeches, as well as secondary material pertaining to the usage of *Pancasila*, we shall see that Sukarno and Suharto were actively working to make the Indonesian political structure work for themselves rather than for the public.

In order to understand how Presidents Sukarno and Suharto used Indonesian nationalism so that they could retain power, we must first understand the origins of Indonesian nationalism. Chapter one thus examines the first concepts of Indonesian nationalism, which emerged during the Dutch colonial era and was then accelerated under the Japanese occupation of the archipelago. Chapter two looks at the ways that Sukarno and the Old Order developed *Pancasila* from the revolutionary period to the start of the New Order. Chapter three examines the New Order's usage of *Pancasila* and how Suharto was successfully able to indoctrinate the Indonesian population. The conclusion will then analyze the similarities and differences between the two Presidents' usages of nationalist rhetoric.

Chapter One: The Late Colonial Era – Struggling to Define National Identity

Before Sukarno had introduced *Pancasila* as the guiding ideology for Indonesians, there were many different forms of Indonesian nationalism. This chapter will explore the history of different nationalist groups and ideas that were spread throughout the archipelago during the first half of the twentieth century. Throughout the chapter we will see how the ideas and agendas of different nationalist groups were unable to unify themselves to form a strong and successful nationalist movement.

Prior to 1912, one would be hard-pressed to find many forms of political nationalism in Indonesia. The first organized nationalist movement was focused on culture, not politics, and was connected to ideas spanning from Pan-Islamic and Islamic modernism movements. In 1908, two students attending medical school in Batavia, Raden Soetomo and Raden Goenawan Mangoenkoesoemo, founded the non-political group *Budi Utomo* (Pure Endeavor).¹ Its initial goal was to develop both Western-based and Islamic-based education on the island of Java. The group tried to push the East Indies government to expand access to Western education for a small segment of Javanese elites, but its pressure only had minor success. *Budi Utomo* originally spread quickly amongst students, by some estimates including “nearly all the students above the sixth grade in Java,” but it never acquired a mass following among lower and uneducated Indonesians.² The organization reached its peak membership, of just 10,000, by the end of 1909.³ *Budi Otomo*’s strength was short lived, in part owing to it being consistently short on funds and having weak

¹ Kahin, *Nationalism and Revolution*, 65.

² Kahin, *Nationalism and Revolution*, 65.

³ Ricklefs, *Modern Indonesia*, 198.

leadership. However, the impact of the group is significant, as many later nationalist leaders learnt from the failures of *Budi Utomo*. Future organizations recognized the need to connect not just with students, but with the Indonesian population on a larger scale.

Budi Otumo opened the flood gates for more nationalist groups to follow. In the same year that *Budi Otumo* reached its peak membership, another important early nationalist group emerged in Batavia: *Sarekat Dagang Islamiyah* (Islamic Commercial Union). This group's original priorities were to support Indonesian traders and merchants, and was not concerned with Indonesian independence. The first three years of the union's history reveal slow, but steady, growth until around 1912, when the organization changed its name to *Sarekat Islam* (Islamic Union, SI) and began to concern itself with non-economic issues.⁴ Of great concern to SI was the preservation of Islamic beliefs in Indonesia. SI leadership was greatly impacted by Modernist Islamic thought that tended to see the Christian missionary activity in the Indies as increasingly aggressive. In Indonesia, Modernist Islam emphasized religious purity based upon the tenants of Islam emanating from the Middle East. This sect of Islam was focused on connecting Indonesian Muslims to international currents, rather than adhering to the forms of Islam which had adopted traditional Indonesian practices. SI encouraged its members to see themselves as fellow Muslims, pushing the importance of uniting against non-Muslims, namely the Dutch and Chinese. Appealing to the unifying properties of Islam propelled SI's rapid growth to roughly 360,000 by 1916 and an estimated two and half million by 1919.⁵

⁴ Ricklefs, *Modern Indonesia*, 200.

⁵ Kahin, *Nationalism and Revolution*, 65-66.

Another reason why SI was more successful than *Budi Otumo* was that it pitted itself against Chinese merchants in the Indies who had been encroaching on the trading rights of Javanese merchants. SI helped to establish numerous boycotts against Chinese in defense of the interest of the Javanese traders. Due to a surge in Chinese nationalism in the Indies, particularly during the revolutionary year of 1911, many Indonesians had come to strongly dislike Chinese. Mark suggests that the emergence of Indonesian nationalism could be attributed “as much to resentment and envy of the ethnic Chinese and their economic dominance as to opposition to colonial or Dutch rule.”⁶ SI thus was seen by Indonesians as a symbol of “unity against foreigners, at first especially Chinese.”⁷ Many Indonesians perceived SI “less as a modern political movement than as a means of self-defense” against what they considered to be the greatest threat to their economic independence. Violence between Chinese and Indonesians erupted as SI in both urban and rural centers. The eruption of violence along combined with the rapid growth of SI alarmed the colonial government. Rather than taking a hardline approach against SI, officials decided it was best to take an indirect approach through its refusal to allow its organizational integration.⁸ The administration’s decision reflects its awareness of the strength of SI and its desire to prevent a backlash from the masses. Starting in March 1914, the government began granting legal status to the various branches of SI, purposefully refusing legal status for the organization as a corporate whole.⁹ This caused the central

⁶ Mark, *Japan’s Occupation of Java*, 31.

⁷ Kahin, *Nationalism and Revolution*, 67.

⁸ Kahin, *Nationalism and Revolution*, 69.

⁹ Kahin, *Nationalism and Revolution*, 69.

headquarters to be effectively cut off from the SI base. This strategy proved successful for the Dutch in the short-term by weakening the threat of the SI. However, the long-term ramifications “was the development of the movement in a much more radical direction.”¹⁰ By undermining the authority of the relatively moderate ideas which emanated from the SI central leadership, the colonial government made it easier for other more radical ideologies to infiltrate the regional branches.

While the SI was growing in its reach and impact on the Indonesian masses, another important development began taking place: the first instances of Marxist and socialist thought began to take shape in the Indies. The ramifications of the socialist entry into Indonesian political thought and nationalist ideology caused serious issues for the nationalist movement. In 1914, Hendrik Sneevliet, a former member of the Social Democratic Labor Party in the Netherlands, founded the *Indische Sociaal-Democratische Vereniging* (Indies Social-Democratic Association, ISDV).¹¹ The ISDV was the first communist party in Asia outside the Russian sphere. Sneevliet grew the ISDV quickly, however, it was almost entirely Dutch or Eurasian in both membership and leadership. The astute Sneevliet recognized the need for Indonesians to become active members of his organization in order for it to achieve his goals of revolutionary Marxism in the Indies. This pushed Sneevliet’s attention towards SI, as it was the only organization with a large following among the Indonesian masses at the time. Sneevliet recognized that the rapidly growing SI was the ideal medium for ISDV to establish contact with and capture support

¹⁰ Kahin, *Nationalism and Revolution*, 70.

¹¹ Ricklefs, *Modern Indonesia*, 206.

of the Indonesian masses.¹² Additionally, the colonial government's decision to prevent SI from having a strong central authority created ideal conditions for infiltrating the organization. Sneevliet's opportunity arose when in 1915, when a young Javanese railway worker named Semaun, a member of SI in Sēmarang, joined the ISDV.¹³ By 1917, Semaun had emerged as the regional leader and the SI membership in Sēmarang, located in central Java, numbered roughly 20,000. Semaun used his leadership position to push the Sēmarang branch and its members towards leftist views. Sneevliet and Semaun's Marxist ideas spread beyond Sēmarang to other branches of the SI, further splintering the already decentralized group.

Dutch leadership decided to take a different approach to governing the Indies at the same time that the SI was undergoing internal divisions. During the First World War contact between the Indies and the Netherlands became increasingly difficult to maintain. In the midst of the war, two ideas began to circulate amongst Indonesians: first, the creation of a part-time militia composed of Indonesians, and second the creation of a legislative assembly that would grant popular representation to Indonesians. In 1916, a delegation with representatives from both *Budi Utomo* and SI sailed for the Netherlands where they gave lectures and petitioned for the two demands. The ideas were brought before the Dutch States-General, where the former was shot down and the latter approved in December 1916.¹⁴ The archipelago now had a *Volksraad* (People's Council) that would consist of

¹² Kahin, *Nationalism and Revolution*, 71.

¹³ Ricklefs, *Modern Indonesia*, 207.

¹⁴ Ricklefs, *Modern Indonesia*, 206.

elected officials. The groups that had developed in the Indies now adjusted their organization to become genuine political parties. The *Volksraad* decision also furthered the divide between leftist members of the SI who were skeptical of Dutch benevolence and those who saw opportunity for legal means of changing the Indies situation.

The final split of SI created a divide amongst Indonesian nationalists that would continue through the first decade of the Indonesian independence. In the wake of World War I, Indies colonial officials began a crackdown on communist activities in Indonesia. In December 1918, Sneevliet was arrested and forced to leave Indonesia.¹⁵ Other Dutch leaders of the ISDV were also exiled, leaving the group to fall to Indonesian leadership, enabling it at last to connect to the mass base it had desired for so long. Control of the organization fell completely into the hands of Semaun, who was becoming increasingly discouraged by the SI's cooperative approach with the government's *Volksraad* decision. When the first session of the *Volksraad* in 1918 proved to be successful, the ISDV began to worry that it would draw more progressive Indonesians away from the extreme left. SI's leadership was also growing progressively frustrated by the Semaun faction, feeling that it was hurting Indies prospects at self-government. At the fourth national congress of SI in 1919, SI leadership rejected Semaun's calls for a more radical approach against the Dutch. The actions of SI leadership and colonial officials made it evident to Semaun and his followers that the "political environment was turning against radicalism."¹⁶ Semaun finally split away from the SI in May 1920, converting the ISDV into *Pěrsěrikatan*

¹⁵ Kahin, *Nationalism and Revolution*, 74.

¹⁶ Ricklefs, *Modern Indonesia*, 209.

Kommunist di India (the Communist Association in the Indies); in 1924 the name was changed to *Partai Komunis Indonesia* (the Indonesian Communist Party, PKI).¹⁷ The party formed a close connection with the Comintern, joining the international organization by the end of 1920.¹⁸ Communism had fully entered the Indies.

The newly formed PKI severely hurt the prospects of a unified nationalist movement. The PKI continued the ISDV's approach of infiltrating the decentralized local branches of SI, gaining control of majority of the branches within just four years.¹⁹ However, a significant portion of the peasant membership of these coopted branches faded away. One of the reasons that the PKI pushed away these followers was because of the group's anti-religious stance. In November 1920, the PKI's newspaper published Lenin's theses on national and colonial questions, which included the condemnation of Pan-Islam. This backfired horribly for the PKI, which "could not avoid the charge of being anti-Islamic,"²⁰ a scar that would cause the party severe problems throughout the rest of its history. Throughout most of the 1920s, the PKI and SI struggled to gain control over a mass following, causing what had begun as a burgeoning nationalist movement to come to a grinding halt.

While the PKI and SI were struggling in their competition to find political footing, a new development was taking place amongst Indonesian students. Study groups were developing that encouraged Indonesians to think of themselves as a united people, rather

¹⁷ Ricklefs, *Modern Indonesia*, 209.

¹⁸ Kahin, *Nationalism and Revolution*, 74.

¹⁹ Kahin, *Nationalism and Revolution*, 76.

²⁰ Ricklefs, *Modern Indonesia*, 210.

than focusing on the differences of their ethnicity, religion, and political identity. One of the first of these organizations formed in Holland. In 1922, Indonesian students studying in Holland formed a group called *Pěrhimpunan Indonesia* (Indonesian Association or Indonesian Union, PI). Kahin considers this organization to be “of greatest importance in determining the character of the Indonesian nationalist movement.”²¹ The group’s membership included two prominent nationalist leaders and future Prime Ministers of Indonesia: Mohammad Hatta and Sutan Sjahrir. The group’s program originally stood for the unified efforts of all Indonesians, regardless of class, ethnicity, or religion, to accomplish complete independence for Indonesia. The radical ideas of the PI had a major impact on the evolution of nationalism in the Indies. When PI members finished their studies and returned to the Indies they helped to establish similar study groups in cities and universities.

One such study group was founded at the Technical College of Bandung by a young engineer named Sukarno. Sukarno had been inspired by PI’s progress at developing study groups at other colleges, and in November 1925 decided to make his own. From its origin, Sukarno’s study club was “overtly political, with independence for Indonesia being its goal.”²² In 1926, Sukarno published a series of articles arguing that the ideologies of Islam, Marxism, and nationalism should be united for the single cause of Indonesian independence. In these articles, Sukarno called for a “Ship of Unity” to guide the three

²¹ Kahin, *Nationalism and Revolution*, 88.

²² Ricklefs, *Modern Indonesia*, 218.

ideologies together towards a common goal.²³ In Sukarno's opinion, only a united front could help liberate Indonesia. Unity is a central theme in these articles, as can be seen in Sukarno's pitch to PKI and SI leaders that "only Unity will lead us to Greatness and Independence."²⁴ Sukarno pleads with each group not to put aside their differences, but to find what they have in common in the movement. This was Sukarno's first major publication and shows how his commitment to Indonesian unity was established well before he had political authority and responsibility. Shortly after this publication in July 1927, Sukarno, now graduated, created a new political party, originally called the *Perserikatan Nasional Indonesia* (Indonesian Nationalist Association). In May 1928, the group changed its name to *Partai Nasional Indonesia* (Indonesian Nationalist Party, PNI). The PNI's agenda was imminently more radical than any of the colony's previous groups, as it sought complete independence, both economic and political, for Indonesia. The PNI's program, combined with the skilled leadership of Sukarno, caused the party to grow rapidly; by the end of 1929 it had over 10,000 members across every major city on Java.²⁵ The PNI's quick growth drew the attention of the Dutch, and on December 24, 1929 Sukarno and seven other leaders of the organization were arrested.²⁶ On September 3, 1930, Sukarno was convicted of being a threat to the public order and sentenced to four years in

²³ Sukarno, *Nationalism, Islam, and Marxism*, trans. Karel H. Warouw and Peter D. Welden (Ithaca: Cornell Modern Indonesia Project, 1970), 36, <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=coo.31924063782266&view=1up&seq=3>.

²⁴ Sukarno, *Nationalism, Islam, and Marxism*, 62.

²⁵ Ricklefs, *Modern Indonesia*, 219.

²⁶ Kahin, *Nationalism and Revolution*, 91.

Sukamiskin prison in Bandung.²⁷ Following Sukarno's arrest, the PNI splintered into multiple different factions. Once the most promising nationalist party, PNI dissolved without its leadership and more division was created within the nationalist movement.

The nationalist movement in Indonesia was once again without strong momentum. On September 14, 1930, only days after Sukarno's sentencing, the first of these parties, the *Partai Rakjat Indonesia* (Indonesian People's Party) was formed.²⁸ Its agenda called for the eventual achievement of independence for Indonesia, but, it favored a cooperative approach with the Dutch. *Partai Rakjat Indonesia* attracted a small number of former PNI members. Of greater significance was the creation of *Partindo* (*Partai Indonesia*, Indonesian Party) at the end of April 1931. *Partindo* had much of the same goals of the PNI, including achieving independence through non-cooperation and mass action. Despite the similarities, many Indonesians were once again disillusioned by the nationalist movement, leading to *Partindo* having about just 3,000 members in February 1932.²⁹ One reason for *Partindo*'s slow development was the creation of yet another party in December 1931, *Pendidikan Nasional Indonesia* (Indonesian Nationalist Education),³⁰ which, because of its initials, was called PNI-*Baru* (New PNI). The PNI-*Baru*, like the original PNI before it, benefited from having exceptionally gifted leaders in Hatta and Sjahrir, both of whom joined upon their arrival back from Holland where they had established the PI. The PNI-*Baru* started off with similar ambitions as the original PNI, however, the group

²⁷ Ricklefs, *Modern Indonesia*, 220.

²⁸ Kahin, *Nationalism and Revolution*, 92.

²⁹ Ricklefs, *Modern Indonesia*, 225.

³⁰ Ricklefs, *Modern Indonesia*, 225.

soon moved towards its own agenda, believing that mass action was too difficult due to the political repression of the Dutch. The divisions between PNI's offshoots intensified in December 1931 when Sukarno was released early from prison. After a failed attempt at reunifying the splintering nationalist movement, Sukarno joined *Partindo* in July 1932 and was unanimously elected chairman. Under his leadership, *Partindo* adopted a more nationalist line and its membership grew rapidly. Sukarno's oratorical skills impressed both urban elites and rural peasantry. By mid-1933, the party had over 20,000 members, compared to about 1,000 members in the *PKI-Baru*.³¹

It seemed that the nationalist movement was finally gaining momentum, when Sukarno was arrested for a second time in August 1933. There was no trial for this second arrest, and Sukarno was exiled to the island of Flores, before being moved to South Sumatra in 1938, where he would remain until the Japanese invasion in 1942.³² In February 1934, the government moved to suppress the *PNI-Baru*, arresting Hatta and Sjahrir, who would also remain in prison until released by the Dutch during Japan's invasion. After these arrests, "radical anticolonialism on a non-cooperative basis was effectively dead."³³ For the remainder of the Dutch colonial period the nationalist movement was forced either underground or to find ways to cooperate with the colonial administration through legal means. Symbolic of the trend towards more moderate political organizations was the rise of *Parindra* (*Partai Indonesia Raya*, Greater Indonesian Party), which was formed in

³¹ Kahin, *Nationalism and Revolution*, 94.

³² Ricklefs, *Modern Indonesia*, 227.

³³ Ricklefs, *Modern Indonesia*, 228.

December 1935 following the merger of *Budi Utomo* with another group, *Persatuan Bangsa Indonesia* (Indonesian People's Union).³⁴ *Parindra*'s aim was eventual independence for the Indies based on cooperation with the Dutch. The party felt that its best basis of gaining independence would be through the *Volksraad*, where *Parindra* was quickly able to gain political footing. The group was able to achieve minor improvements for the social conditions of Indonesians, such as establishing retail cooperatives and a program to encourage literacy, but it was not as successful on the political front.³⁵ In July 1936, a petition was submitted to the *Volksraad* which called for a conference to arrange the gradual independence of Indonesia from the Dutch over a ten year period. The request, known as the Soetardjo Petition after the *Volksraad* member who originally put forth the idea, was modeled on the deal the United States had given the Philippines in 1933.³⁶ The Soetardjo Petition was denied by The Hague in November 1938, causing the nationalist movement to once again rethink its tactics.

Disgruntled by the rejection, the nationalist parties were finally drawn together, forming one large organization in May 1939 called GAPI (*Gabungan Politik Indonesia*, Indonesian Political Federation).³⁷ This group united eight of the most important nationalist organizations, with the exception of PNI-*Baru*. In December 1939, GAPI sponsored an Indonesian People's Congress in Batavia, which was attended by over ninety different nationalist organizations from across the archipelago representing various social, political,

³⁴ Ricklefs, *Modern Indonesia*, 228.

³⁵ Kahin, *Nationalism and Revolution*, 95.

³⁶ Ricklefs, *Modern Indonesia*, 228.

³⁷ Ricklefs, *Modern Indonesia*, 229.

and economic stances.³⁸ Echoing the need for unity put forward in Sukarno's Nationalism, Islam, and Marxism articles, the leaders of the Congress felt compelled to push emphasize the need for unity across nationalist groups. Three important actions were taking at the meeting that helped achieve this goal. First, the congress officially adopted *Bahasa Indonesia* as the national language. *Bahasa Indonesia*'s roots stemmed from Malay and had been the language franca within the archipelago for centuries. Second, the song *Indonesia Raya* ("Greater Indonesia") was chosen as the national anthem. Third, the striped red and white flag was chosen as the national flag. These three items united the nationalist movement under common entities. It finally seemed that Sukarno's desires for unity amongst the many different organizations was going to be realized. GAPI's progress, however, was rendered mute when, on May 10, 1940, Hitler invaded the Netherlands and the Dutch government fled to exile in London.³⁹ World War II had begun in Europe, and the Dutch declared that no changes would be made to Indonesia's colonial status while the war continued.

The fall of the Netherlands excited the nationalist movement. Writing from prison, Sjahrir wrote that "the fall of Holland evoked secret satisfaction, and it was expected that there would be still more radical happenings."⁴⁰ He believed that the war in Europe "provided a stimulus for further estrangement from the Dutch and for the growth of a national self-consciousness."⁴¹ Sjahrir's calculations were accurate, as the years following

³⁸ Kahin, *Nationalism and Revolution*, 97.

³⁹ Ricklefs, *Modern Indonesia*, 230.

⁴⁰ Sutan Sjahrir, *Out of Exile*, trans. Charles Wolf, Jr. (New York: John Day Co., 1949), 218.

⁴¹ Sjahrir, *Out of Exile*, 219.

the Netherlands's capitulation saw a further divide between Indonesians and Dutch officials, while the solidarity of the nationalist movement grew even stronger. A second Indonesian People's Conference was held during September 1941 in Yogyakarta with a representation that was larger than the first.⁴² During the meeting, it was decided to establish a permanent organization that would be a representative body of the entire national movement with its chief objective being a parliamentary group to which the colonial government would be held responsible.⁴³ The nationalist movement had just embarked upon this project when the Japanese invasion began.

The Netherlands's defense of the Indies was abysmal. During the final days of February 1942, the *Times of India* reported that the Japanese were securing strongholds on the islands surrounding Java preparing to take the offensive to the Indies most populated island.⁴⁴ On the night of February 28, 1942, the Japanese 16th Army expeditionary forces landed outside Batavia in West Java.⁴⁵ Predictably, the Indonesian public did little to assist the Dutch in the fighting against the Japanese. After four days, the capital city of Batavia had been abandoned by the Dutch and was declared an open city.⁴⁶ On March 8, within just eight days of the Japanese landing, the Dutch Commander in Chief of Allied forces on Java surrendered. Although they would try to retake the Indies after World War II, Dutch colonial authority in Indonesia, after nearly 300 years on Java and close to fifty years for

⁴² Kahin, *Nationalism and Independence*, 100.

⁴³ Kahin, *Nationalism and Independence*, 100.

⁴⁴ "Enemy Gain Footholds in Java: Situation Believed Serious," *Times of India*, February 26, 1942.

⁴⁵ Mark, *Japan's Occupation of Java*, 69.

⁴⁶ Mark, *Japan's Occupation of Java*, 77.

other parts of the archipelago, was at its end. The three years of the Japanese occupation of the archipelago were some of the most difficult years for many Indonesians. Although the Japanese were originally welcomed by the Indonesian population as liberators, the Japanese military proved to be significantly harsher than the colonial administration had been. Indonesians were subjected to forced labor programs, intense inflation, hostile Japanese soldiers, and periodic famine. The nationalist movement, however, was one of the few groups to benefit, albeit not always, under the Japanese.

When they first arrived, Japanese forces originally did not anticipate any genuine opposition from nationalist leaders. One reason they believed this was the genuinely warm welcome that Indonesians presented Japan's forces within the days following the Netherlands's surrender. The *Times of India* reported that the locals had been "taking the invasion calmly," opting not participate in fighting alongside the Dutch.⁴⁷ Indonesians flocked to the streets of Java singing the Indonesia Raya and waving the red and white flag that GAPI had deemed the national flag.⁴⁸ This excitement was because the Japanese were seen as "liberators from colonial oppression."⁴⁹ Additionally, after the Japanese interned "practically the whole Dutch population" in concentration camps, they had to rely on Indonesians to fill the administrative posts which had been left vacant.⁵⁰ Thus, most educated Indonesians who had worked for the colonial bureaucracy found themselves receiving promotions to fill the empty positions. *Parindra*, the moderate political

⁴⁷ "Jap Troops Invade Java: Fierce Land, Sea and Air Battles," *Time of India*, March 2, 1942.

⁴⁸ Kahin, *Nationalism and Revolution*, 102.

⁴⁹ Anderson, *Java in a Time of Revolution*, 35.

⁵⁰ Kahin, *Nationalism and Revolution*, 102.

organization that had formed following the crackdown on radical nationalism in the early 1930s, quickly gave Japan their support on the same day that the Dutch surrendered. In a letter to the Japanese Army Commander in Surabaya, *Parinda* stated that it “agrees with the aim of Japan in bringing about a new prosperity in Asia, especially for the advancement and glory of the people and land of Indonesia.”⁵¹ In this way, the Japanese were initially able to win over or neutralize the opposition of a large portion of Indonesians.

With the seeming support of the Indonesian masses, Japanese officials felt that they could easily exploit the resources of the archipelago. In April 1942, Japan introduced a new to the Indonesian public which was called the Triple A Movement (*Perggerakan Tiga A*). The three A’s stood for “Japan the Leader of Asia, Japan the Light of Asia, and Japan the Mother/Protector of Asia.”⁵² The program was designed to increase the feeling of pan-Asian unity amongst Indonesians and to expand upon the warm welcome which the Japanese had first received. However, it was not received well by most Modernist Islamic communities. Indonesians were also growing more aware of how their economic and natural resources were being drained in support of Japan’s war effort with little actual benefit for the Indonesian masses. Additionally, the program received little to no support from many of the Indonesian administrators that had recently received promotions, nor did any of the major Indonesian nationalist groups become involved in helping to spread the ideology.⁵³ As a result, the Triple A Movement did not achieve its objectives and quietly

⁵¹ Mark, *Japan’s Occupation of Java*, 93; Gunseikanbu, *Orang Indonesia jang terkemoeka di Djawa* (1944; repr., Yogyakarta: Gadjah Mada University Press, 1986), 268.

⁵² Kahin, *Nationalism and Revolution*, 103; Mark, *Japan’s Occupation of Java*, 92; Ricklefs, *Modern Indonesia*, 238.

⁵³ Ricklefs, *Modern Indonesia*, 239.

drifted into oblivion without the Japanese ever officially announcing its end.⁵⁴ Recognizing their failure, the Japanese decided that they would need the assistance of the pre-war nationalist movements. Japan's military leaders thus turned their attention to the nationalist leaders who had been able to amass the largest following.

The Indonesian nationalist leaders had their own objectives. On July 9, 1942, the Japanese released Sukarno from prison in South Sumatra and returned him to Java, where he was reunited with Sjahrir and Hatta, both of whom had been let out of prison by the Dutch just prior to Japan's victory.⁵⁵ Amongst the three men, it was agreed that Sukarno and Hatta would cooperate with the Japanese in an attempt to advance the nationalist movement, while Sjahrir would work with underground groups to advance the nationalist cause. Sukarno and Hatta's decision to cooperate with Japan led them to be heavily criticized by the Dutch as being pro-Japanese and pro-fascist supporters. Sjahrir, however, notes that they all considered the Japanese "as pure fascists, and felt that we must use the most subtle countermethods to get around them, such as making an appearance of collaboration...[to do] everything legally possible to give the nationalist struggle a broader scope."⁵⁶

After they had reached their agreement, Sukarno kept a relatively low profile in Java, making no public appearances until December 1942.⁵⁷ On December 5, Sukarno delivered a radio address that spoke directly to the Indonesian masses. In the broadcast,

⁵⁴ Mark, *Japan's Occupation of Java*, 205.

⁵⁵ Kahin, *Nationalism and Revolution*, 104; Ricklefs, *Modern Indonesia*, 238-239.

⁵⁶ Sjahrir, *Out of Exile*, 246.

⁵⁷ Mark, *Japan's Occupation of Java*, 202.

Sukarno essentially gives the Japanese his complete support, saying “if this war does not end in victory, all of our aspirations, all of our hopes, all of our efforts will be shattered, and we shall once again suffer and be oppressed and exploited by allied imperialism. Only a Japanese victory can save us.”⁵⁸ Sukarno believed that the possible return of Dutch imperialism would decimate any of the progress of the nationalist movement. That Sukarno opted to use his first public broadcast to the Indonesian people since his arrest in 1934 to give support to the Japanese shows that he was committed to find a way to advance Indonesian independence regardless of the circumstances. Sukarno was taken aback when, on January 28, 1943, Japan’s Prime Minister Tōjō promised national independence to Burma and the Philippines in the near future without addressing Indonesia’s fate.⁵⁹

This rebuff greatly infuriated the nationalist leaders, prompting Sukarno to establish yet another nationalist organization in March 1943 called *Poesat Tenaga Rakjat* (Center of Popular Power), which was commonly called *Poetera*.⁶⁰ Sukarno was chosen as chairman and Hatta as vice-chairman. *Poetera* incorporated all of the existing political and nonpolitical nationalist associations which were based on Java and neighboring Madura into this new group.⁶¹ Its goal, like so many of the nationalist groups before it, was the eventual self-government of the archipelago by Indonesians. Unlike Sukarno’s earlier nationalist groups which operated under the basis of non-cooperation with the Dutch,

⁵⁸ Sukarno, “Marilah melangkah ke zaman baroe,” text of a radio speech delivered on December 5, 1942 and published in *Asia Raya Lembaran Istimewa*, December 7, 1942.

⁵⁹ Mark, *Japan’s Occupation of Java*, 235.

⁶⁰ Mark, *Japan’s Occupation of Java*, 204.

⁶¹ Kahin, *Nationalism and Revolution*, 106.

Poetera aligned itself with the Japanese. For their part, Japanese officials saw *Poetera* as a means which they had been looking for to rally Indonesian support behind their war effort. The occupation authorities therefore did not attempt to contain *Poetera*'s efforts at indoctrinating the population. Within months of the establishment of *Poetera*, the nationalist movement was once again able to accrue a mass base.

With support and sponsorship from *Poetera*, the Japanese were able to establish a volunteer army on Java in October 1943. The organization, commonly referred to as Peta (*Pěmbela Tanah Air*, Protectors of the Fatherland), was a Japanese trained, but Indonesian officered, military organization.⁶² Peta was useful to both the nationalist movement and the Japanese. For Japan, it provided extra defense force in the case of Allied invasion. Peta's training programs were also a way for the Japanese to promote their own indoctrination programs. Many of Peta's volunteers were uneducated, and were therefore particularly easily to influence according to anti-Western and anti-Allied ideas. The Indonesian nationalists similarly benefited from Peta's formation, also using the opportunities available to indoctrinate the Indonesian youth on the dangers of imperialism. Indonesians already committed to the nationalist movement joined Peta to gain military experience. Infiltration was one of the chief objectives of the underground nationalist movement led by Sjahrir.⁶³ Additionally, nationalist leaders saw the potential of having a highly trained army available in the event that they would need to fight for their independence. By the

⁶² Anderson, *Java in a Time of Revolution*, 20.

⁶³ Kahin, *Nationalism and Revolution*, 113.

end of the war, Peta had more than 60,000 volunteers, roughly 37,000 on Java, 20,000 on Sumatra, and 1,600 on Bali.⁶⁴

Once Peta was well established, the Japanese turned on the Indonesian nationalists. In January 1944, the Japanese military command dissolved *Poetera*, even, as noted by Mark, “their public cooperation added an important stamp of legitimacy to Japanese policies.”⁶⁵ According to Kahin, Japanese officials felt that *Poetera* “was accomplishing considerably more for the Indonesian nationalist movement than it was for the Japanese war effort.”⁶⁶ Knowing that they still required the support of the Indonesian public, the Japanese formed another organization, the *Jawa Hokokai* (Java Service Association), which they felt they would be able to control more effectively.⁶⁷ Sukarno was appointed as the chairman for this group, although the ultimate leadership fell to the *Gunseikan*, the head of the Japanese military administration. In order to neutralize and limit the ability of Sukarno from hijacking *Jawa Hokokai* into another nationalist oriented group, the *Gunseikan* insisted that the organization include members of the Chinese, Arab, and Eurasian ethnic communities, not just Indonesians.⁶⁸ *Jawa Hokokai* proved successful for

⁶⁴ Ricklefs, *Modern Indonesia*, 242; many of these soldiers would form the basis of the Indonesian Republican Army.

⁶⁵ Mark, *Japan's Occupation of Java*, 260.

⁶⁶ Kahin, *Nationalism and Revolution*, 110.

⁶⁷ Ricklefs, *Modern Indonesia*, 243.

⁶⁸ Anderson, *Java in a Time of Revolution*, 28.

the Japanese, providing them with effective ways to maintain surveillance over the population and distribute pro-Japanese propaganda.⁶⁹

Despite Japan's success with *Jawa Hokokai*, it was experiencing losses elsewhere in its war effort. The war in the Pacific was beginning to turn in the favor of the Allied powers. In February 1944 the Americans pushed the Japanese out of the Marshall Islands and in June bombings on the Japanese main islands began.⁷⁰ With the Japanese military forces crumbling, the politicians in Tokyo finally considered independence for Indonesia. On September 7, 1944, Japan's Prime Minister Koiso Kuniaki promised, but set no date for, Indonesian independence.⁷¹ The 16th Army, which had been in control of Java throughout the duration of the war, was told to kindle nationalist forces and relax its control over *Jawa Hokokai*.⁷² As Japan's losses continued to pile on top of one another in the final months of 1944 and into 1945, the nationalists, led most vocally by Sukarno, pressed Japan to follow through on the Koiso Declaration.⁷³ According to the *Time of India*, Sukarno claimed that nearly 95 percent of the population of the Indies, roughly 70 million people, were part of the nationalist movement and willing to move against Japan if needed.⁷⁴ As a result, on March 1, 1945, the Japanese announced the formation of an Investigating Committee for Preparatory Work for Indonesian Independence. The Committee met for

⁶⁹ Anderson, *Java in a Time of Revolution*, 29.

⁷⁰ Ricklefs, *Modern Indonesia*, 243.

⁷¹ Ricklefs, *Modern Indonesia*, 244.

⁷² Kahin, *Nationalism and Revolution*, 115.

⁷³ Kahin, *Nationalism and Revolution*, 121; Ricklefs, *Modern Indonesia*, 245.

⁷⁴ "Indonesians Regime in Java: Nationalists form Cabinet," *Time of India*, September 26, 1945.

the first time on May 28 in the building which the *Volksraad* had used during the late colonial stage.⁷⁵ It was during the first week of the committee's meeting, on June 1, that Sukarno presented his image for a unique, religiously and ethnically neutral form of nationalism which would come to shape Indonesia's politics and national identity throughout the twentieth and into the twenty-first century.

Indonesian nationalism was not a cohesive movement during the late colonial era. Although the movement was in agreement about its desires for independence from Dutch rule, there were constant divisions regarding how to best achieve their goals. The nationalist groups were also too reliant upon singular leaders who were easily targeted by colonial officials. With nationalist leaders arrested and exiled, the energy of the masses fizzled easily. The nationalist movement was just beginning to unite when the Japanese invaded the archipelago in 1942 and ended Dutch colonial rule. During the three years of Japan's occupation of Indonesia, Sukarno's position as the leader of the nationalist movement was accelerated, and Indonesia's independence was given greater consideration. By 1945, what remained for the nationalist groups was to decide upon a singular ideology which they could unify behind.

⁷⁵ Kahin, *Nationalism and Revolution*, 121.

Chapter Two: Sukarno's Era *Pancasila* as Popular Movement

Sukarno had undoubtedly been one of the most prominent leaders of the nationalist movement both during the late Dutch colonial period as well as during the Japanese occupation. It is during the summer of 1945 when Sukarno steps from leading the nationalist struggle to leading the entirety of the Indonesian people. Sukarno's leading position allowed him to mold much of Indonesia's earliest political decisions, including the national ideology. His role in building Indonesia's identity is further enhanced when he is elected as the nation's first president. As president, Sukarno increasingly developed his executive authority to allow him to lead by personal rule.

During the summer of 1945, Indonesia went through tremendous developments that would have lasting repercussions for decades. On May 28, the Investigating Committee for Preparatory Work for Indonesian Independence gathered for the first time to discuss the plans for an independent Indonesia. Then Preparatory Committee's chairman, Radjiman Wediodiningrat, had called on the group's sixty-two members to present their opinions on how to establish the philosophical basis of the state.¹ The first three days of the group's meeting were filled with speeches focused on minute details about independence and how to unify the many different political ideas.² Many of the members were devout Muslims who wanted Indonesia's political basis to be based upon Islamic principles. This notion was unable to secure the full support and for the first three days the members were not able to agree on much. Tensions amongst the members when the Preparatory Committee

¹ Kahin, *Nationalism and Revolution*, 121.

² Sukarno, "The Birth of Pantja Sila," 3.

gathered for their fourth day on June 1 were high as Sukarno took to the podium to deliver his ideas for the philosophical basis of the state. In this speech, Sukarno outlined his view on how to establish a unified independent state by focusing on five principles, or as he called them, *Pancasila*. Whether Sukarno intended it to or not, this speech would help propel Sukarno to the center of Indonesian political leadership. This speech is one of the, if not the single, most significant speeches for Indonesian nation building. As such, it requires close examination.

Sukarno begins the speech by recognizing the difficulty of finding a common political ground within the Preparatory Committee over the previous days. He notes how he was originally concerned that the members would be overly concerned with small matters “to the point of, as the Javanese say, *djelimet* (hair-splitting).”³ Sukarno believed that this *djelimet* was slowing down the Preparatory Committee’s main goals and limiting the ability of the group to focus on their commonalities. Before proposing any of the five principles Sukarno appealed to the groups to find unity. In classic Sukarno fashion, he reminds the members that they “must look for agreement of mind” and “unity of philosophical basis.”⁴ He went on to speak directly to the two main groups; those who want an Islamic based system of government and those who don’t. Sukarno called to “the nationalist group” and “the Islamic group” to “establish a state ‘all for all,’ neither for a

³ Sukarno, “The Birth of Pantja Sila,” 3.

⁴ Sukarno, “The Birth of Pantja Sila,” 9.

single individual, nor for one group—whether it be a group of the aristocracy or a group of the wealthy—but ‘all for all’.”⁵

Sukarno’s petition for unity was followed by his detailing of the five principles. The first principle while Sukarno introduced was nationalism. Sukarno used a tremendous amount of pathos when presenting this first principle saying: “thus what has always throbbed in my soul, not only during these days of the sittings of this Investigating Body, but ever since 1918, for more than 25 years is this: the first basis suitable to become a foundation for the state of Indonesia, is the basis of nationalism.”⁶ Sukarno played into both his audience and his location when specifying 1918 as the origin for his nationalist leanings. This would have stuck with many of the members sitting in the chamber, the reason being that 1918 was when the first session of the *Volksraad* had taken place in that very building. Knowing that having nationalism as his first principle would upset the portion of the committee who had been advocating for an Islamic basis for the state, Sukarno appeals to them. He asked “the Islamic group to excuse my using the word ‘Nationalism,’” noting that he too was “a man of Islam.”⁷ Sukarno goes on to explain that what he meant by nationalism was yet another way to talk about unity, and that moving forward the committee and all political leaders should be concerned not with their own beliefs and issues, but the concerns of all the Indonesian people. Sukarno said “this is what we must all aim at: the setting up of one National State upon the unity of one Indonesian

⁵ Sukarno, “The Birth of Pantja Sila,” 10.

⁶ Sukarno, “The Birth of Pantja Sila,” 10.

⁷ Sukarno, “The Birth of Pantja Sila,” 10.

land from the tip of Sumatra right to Irian!”⁸ He went on to emphasize the importance of inter-island and inter-ethnic unity saying “neither Javanese nationalism, nor Sumatran nationalism, nor the nationalism of Borneo, or of Sulawesi, Bali or any other, but Indonesian nationalism, all of them together, which becomes the basis of one national state.”⁹ Clearly, Sukarno considered nationalism another form of unity and a way to connect the diverse population of the archipelago.

Following his thorough discussion on nationalism, Sukarno introduced his second principle ideology: internationalism. At first thought, one might be skeptical about how nationalism and internationalism can pair together. Despite this apparent contradiction, or quite possibly because of it, this principle received the shortest explanation from Sukarno. By internationalism Sukarno meant that Indonesia must not become so preoccupied with nationalism that it would isolate itself from the outside world. Sukarno explained to the committee that “the nationalism we advocate is not the nationalism of isolation.”¹⁰ He went on to say that “internationalism cannot flourish if it is not rooted in the soil of nationalism. Nationalism cannot flourish if it does not grow in the flowergarden of internationalism.”¹¹ In this section of the speech, it seems clear that Sukarno is already thinking about Indonesia as an independent state operating on the world stage. Sukarno wanted Indonesia to become an important part of global politics, something that the archipelago was not able to do under Dutch colonial control. This part of Sukarno’s presented ideology was likely intended to

⁸ Sukarno, “The Birth of Pantja Sila,” 12.

⁹ Sukarno, “The Birth of Pantja Sila,” 13.

¹⁰ Sukarno, “The Birth of Pantja Sila,” 14.

¹¹ Sukarno, “The Birth of Pantja Sila,” 14.

win the good will of foreign countries, particularly the Allied powers who might have considered Sukarno to be a Japanese sympathizer.

Sukarno's third principle was introduced as a combination of "*mufakat*, unanimity, the principle of *perwakilan*, representation, [and] the principle of *permusjawaratan*, deliberation amongst representatives."¹² In sum, Sukarno was promoting the idea of democracy. Sukarno appeared hopeful that this principle would be able to appease the Islamic groups who might have been ostracized by the nationalist principle. He spoke directly to these groups saying:

If we really are a Moslem people, let us work as hard as possible so that most of the seats in the people's representative body which we will create, are occupied by Moslem delegates. If the Indonesian people really are a people who are Moslem for the greater part, and if it is true that Islam here is a religion which is alive in the hearts of the masses, let us leaders move every one of the people to mobilise as many Moslem delegates as possible for this representative body....Then, automatically, laws issuing from this people's representative body will be Islamic.¹³

This part of the speech revealed the inner politician within Sukarno. He showed that he knew his audience well by using this principle to appeal to the Islamic groups. Securing their support was crucial in getting *Pancasila* to become the leading ideology.

It is within Sukarno's explanation of the fourth principle, social justice, that his leftist sympathies became the most apparent. Sukarno calls on the committee to adopt social justice as a principle, however his thoughts were not on humanitarian social justice but on economic justice. Without explicitly saying that Indonesia should embrace either socialism or Marxism, Sukarno used this section of his speech to critique capitalism saying

¹² Sukarno, "The Birth of Pantja Sila," 14.

¹³ Sukarno, "The Birth of Pantja Sila," 15.

“are not people at the mercy of the capitalists throughout the whole Western world?”¹⁴ Sukarno believed that capitalist systems exploited the majority of people, something which he felt was not suitable within Indonesia. Sukarno further said “if we truly understand, remember and love the people of Indonesia, let us accept this principle of social justice, that is, not only political equality, but we must create equality in the economic field too.”¹⁵ Sukarno’s insistence on this principle most likely stems from Indonesia’s history of social and economic injustices under both the Dutch and Japanese. The fifth and final principle which Sukarno introduced was “the principle of Belief in God.”¹⁶ Sukarno gave little explanation for why this principle should be adopted. This suggests that it was included to, again, appease those who wanted Islam to be a central component of Indonesia’s ideology without explicitly making it so.

It was only at the end of the speech when Sukarno finally introduced *Pancasila* as the title for his cumulative principles. He concluded his speech to the Preparatory Council by again stressing the importance of unity. The final parts of this speech are worth quoting in whole because of the intense rhetoric which it espoused. Sukarno said:

If the people of Indonesia desire that the *Pantja Sila* I propose become a reality, that is, if we wish to live as one nation, one independent nationality, if we wish to live as a member of a free world imbued with *perikemanusiaan*, humanity, desire to live upon the basis of *permusjawaratan*, unanimity arising out of deliberation, desire to live a life perfected by social justice, desire to live in comfort and peace, in the widest and most perfect belief in God—do not forget the condition for the realisation of this, and that is struggle, struggle and once again struggle! Do not imagine that with the setting up of the state of Indonesia *Merdeka*,¹⁷ our struggle is

¹⁴ Sukarno, “The Birth of Pantja Sila,” 16.

¹⁵ Sukarno, “The Birth of Pantja Sila,” 17.

¹⁶ Sukarno, “The Birth of Pantja Sila,” 18.

¹⁷ *Merdeka* means independent in *Bahasa Indonesia*.

at an end. No! I even say: within that Indonesia *Merdeka* our struggle must continue, only its character will be different to that of the present struggle, its characteristics will be different. Together, as a united people, we shall continue our struggle to realise our ideals contained in *Pantja Sila*. And, primarily in this time of war, be sure, realise, implant it in your hearts, that Indonesia *Merdeka* can not come if the people of Indonesia do not dare take a risk, do not dare dive for pearls into the depths of the ocean. If the people of Indonesia are not united, and are not determined to death to win independence, the independence of Indonesia will never be the possession of the Indonesian people, never until the end of time.”¹⁸

Sukarno’s message was clear. United, Indonesia would succeed, otherwise it would fail. On this basis, after very little deliberation, Sukarno’s proposal was accepted by the Preparatory Committee. Indonesia, although not yet independent, had found its guiding ideology. The leaders of the independence movement could now fully focus on how to obtain their ultimate goal: autonomy.

The *Pancasila* speech remains critically important to understanding Sukarno’s legacy, as well as for understanding how Suharto later uses the ideology for his purposes. Sukarno intentionally leaves the five pillars of his proposed ideology vague so that they can be applied to the diverse population of the archipelago. Keeping the pillars vague would have been a clever way to appeal to different components of the populace. Ultimately, Sukarno wanted the Indonesian people to feel as though they could be united in trusting a new government.

Indonesia’s independence was given increased legitimacy as the Japanese war effort continued to fail during the summer of 1945. On August 7, a day after the first atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, the Japanese headquarters in Saigon granted permission for the establishment of an all-Indies committee whose announced function was

¹⁸ Sukarno, “The Birth of Pantja Sila,” 21.

to make official preparations for the transfer of all governmental authority from the Japanese military to Indonesian leaders.¹⁹ Another group, the *Panitia Pěrsiapan Kěměrdakaan Indonesia* (Preparatory Committee for Indonesian Independence, PPKI) was established by Japanese officials to replace the Investigating Committee, with Sukarno chosen as its Chairman.²⁰ A day later, Sukarno and Hatta were summoned to Da Lat to meet with General Terauchi, where, on August 11, they were promised that independence would be granted to Indonesia on August 24.²¹ Elated at finally securing a firm date for independence, Sukarno and Hatta returned to Java on August 14. They were greeted by a troubled Sjahrir who warned them of the rumors of Japanese surrender. Sjahrir vocalized to the two men that the underground organizations which he had been connected to felt that proclaiming independence through the Japanese sponsored PPKI would not be accepted by Allied powers.²² He urged Sukarno and Hatta to immediately make a prompt proclamation of independence on their own.²³ Sukarno and Hatta felt that making such a decision would only infuriate the Japanese and possibly cause the military to turn on the Indonesian public. The decision was reached to wait for more news on the war's developments.

They did not have to wait long. At noon on the following day, August 15, Emperor Hirohito's broadcast announcing Japan's surrender was heard on Java. The *Gunseikan* was sent specific orders to hold the political status quo in Indonesia until Allied forces were

¹⁹ Kahin, *Nationalism and Revolution*, 127.

²⁰ Anderson, *Java in a Time of Revolution*, 62.

²¹ Kahin, *Nationalism and Revolution*, 127.

²² Anderson, *Java in a Time of Revolution*, 66.

²³ Kahin, *Nationalism and Revolution*, 134.

able to replace them.²⁴ This destroyed any genuine possibility of a legal transfer of power to the Indies. Indonesians were split on what to do next. The older nationalist leaders who had been involved in the Preparatory Committee and PPKI were unsure of how to proceed, knowing that the Allied powers, including the Dutch, would soon be back in the archipelago. Many of the younger Indonesians who had been militarily trained and indoctrinated in nationalist ideologies as part of Peta wanted independence to be declared right away.²⁵ They recognized however that the only leaders with the authority and prestige to make a politically meaningful independence declaration were Sukarno and Hatta. Without getting their support there would be no way for either the Indonesian population or the international population to take the move seriously.

A plan was made by the Peta youth to kidnap Sukarno and Hatta to coerce them into conceding to declare independence. On the morning of August 16, Hatta and Sukarno were taken from their respective homes to a Peta garrison outside of Jakarta on the pretext of protecting them from an impending Peta uprising in the city.²⁶ The two men shortly realized that there was no uprising, and that the real intention was to force them to declare independence outside of Japanese arrangements. Upon hearing about the abduction, a high ranking member of the Japanese military who had developed sympathies for Indonesian independence and had become a close friendship with Sukarno, Vice Admiral Maeda Tadashi, contacted the Peta base telling them that he would fully cooperate in having

²⁴ Ricklefs, *Modern Indonesia*, 247.

²⁵ Anderson, *Java in a Time of Revolution*, 73.

²⁶ Ricklefs, *Modern Indonesia*, 247.

Indonesian independence declared.²⁷ This commitment seemed to be enough for the Peta officers and Sukarno and Hatta were released. It appears that Maeda's promise was enough to convince Sukarno and Hatta that Japan would not attempt to quell independence. That night Sukarno drafted a declaration which he read outside of his own house on the morning of August 17. It read simply: "We the people of Indonesia hereby declare the independence of Indonesia. Matters concerning the transfer of power and other matters will be carried out in a conscientious manner and as speedily as possible."²⁸ With the assistance of Maeda, the Japanese Naval Office press was used to print copies of the proclamation to distribute throughout Jakarta.²⁹ Sukarno had finally started the Indonesian revolution.

The establishment of a government proceeded rapidly. On the next day, August 18, the PPKI meet, changing its name to *Komite Nasional Indonesia Pusat* (Central Indonesian National Committee, KNI), where the Constitution which had been originally drafted by the Preparatory Committee earlier in the summer was accepted.³⁰ This constitution granted the President strong executive powers. The KNIP then elected Sukarno and Hatta as president and vice president, respectively.³¹ On August 29, the new government began to organize an army, using Peta units as its base, and Sukarno established Indonesia's first

²⁷ Anderson, *Java in a Time of Revolution*, 76.

²⁸ Ricklefs, *Modern Indonesia*, 247.

²⁹ Anderson, *Java in a Time of Revolution*, 83.

³⁰ Kahin, *Nationalism and Revolution*, 138.

³¹ Anderson, *Java in a Time of Revolution*, 88.

cabinet on September 4.³² This original cabinet would last little more than ten weeks before it was reshuffled into a parliamentary style organization, with Sjahrir as Prime Minister. Regardless of this change, the foundations for independent Indonesia were now well established. The next test would come on September 29, when the first Allied troops, led by the British, landed on Jakarta.³³ The Dutch were quick to follow, eager to reoccupy what they still considered to be their rightful colonial possession. They were unaware of how much the political situation had changed during the three years of Japanese occupation and were ignorant to the fact that Indonesians would not effortlessly give control back. Over the course of the following four years, the majority of the archipelago would be at war.³⁴ It was not until December 27, 1949 that the Netherlands, at the demand of the United Nations, formally transferred sovereignty to Indonesia.³⁵ The Republic of the United States of Indonesia was born. This first republic and the idea of federal states was quickly replaced by the unitary Republic of Indonesia on the fifth anniversary of the declaration of independence, August 17, 1950.³⁶ The 1945 Constitution, which had given the president an immense amount of power, was replaced by a new constitution which established a strong parliamentary style government modeled after the Netherlands. The 1950 Constitution kept the presidential role intact, however the positions executive powers were

³² Kahin, *Nationalism and Revolution*, 140; See Anderson, *Java in a Time of Revolution*, 110-111 for a full list of the appointed cabinet members and their positions.

³³ Kahin, *Nationalism and Revolution*, 141.

³⁴ It is beyond the scope of this study to focus on the details of Indonesia's Revolutionary War. For more, see Kahin, *Nationalism and Revolution*, 213-332, as well as Ricklefs, *Modern Indonesia*, 248-270.

³⁵ Ricklefs, *Modern Indonesia*, 269.

³⁶ Ricklefs, *Modern Indonesia*, 270.

greatly reduced. Sukarno remained president under this second republic as Indonesia entered full independence.

Finally independent, the archipelago was able to move in its own direction. The Republic of Indonesia began as a parliamentary style democracy, with the president having a relatively weak role. From 1950 to 1957, the political situation in Indonesia was grim, with political parties constantly competing for power at the expense of the Indonesian public. Many of the political parties of the *Volksraad* era reemerged to compete for control of the government. Both the PNI and PKI were reformed. Two other groups, *Masyumi* and *Nahdlatul Ulama* (Revival of the Religious Scholars, NU), represented Modernist and Traditionalist Islamic political interests, respectively.³⁷ Corruption amongst the parties became widespread as the competition to secure rural, uneducated votes ensued. The army also became an important component of the political situation. Throughout this seven year period, Sukarno's role as president was more of a figurehead than as a political leader. Indeed, the first Prime Minister, Mohammad Natsir, insisted that Sukarno confine himself to his role of a figurehead.³⁸ One of the ways which Sukarno maintained his role during this era was through his speeches. Sukarno relied upon his *Pancasila*, as well as the revolutionary war and themes of unity, to increase his own prestige. In various speeches Sukarno delivered during this era, we can see how he used nationalist rhetoric to speak to the Indonesian population. Sukarno's role grew as the Indonesian population became

³⁷ See Daniel S. Lev, "Political Parties in Indonesia," *Journal of Southeast Asian History* 8, no. 1 (March 1967): 52-67, accessed January 5, 2021, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/20067612>, for descriptions of Indonesia's political parties during the 1950s.

³⁸ Ricklefs, *Modern Indonesia*, 279.

increasingly disgruntled by parliamentary politicians, until 1957, when Sukarno dissolved the parliamentary government and reinstated the 1945 Constitution.

Two years into the Republic of Indonesia's independence, the political situation in Indonesia was in turmoil. Two different cabinets, led by Prime Minister's Mohammad Natsir (September 1950-March 1951) and Sukiman Wirjosandjojo (April 1951-February 1952), had already failed.³⁹ The Indonesian public was growing increasingly dissatisfied with the political situation. Additionally, the economic situation was deteriorating as the price of rubber, the leading national export, fell 71 percent between February 1951 and September 1952.⁴⁰ In this context, Sukarno delivered a presidential address on August 17, 1952, the seventh anniversary of the proclamation of independence and two years after the formation of the Republic. Sukarno spoke of seeing "dissatisfaction" and "lassitude all around" noting that "politically, in economics and in social matters we have not achieved what we aspired to."⁴¹ His solution to the Indonesian people was to

First have the spirit of national freedom which refuses to succumb to even the slightest trace of colonialism. Second, we must have a sincere spirit, forgetting the word 'I' and knowing only the word 'we.' Third, we must have the spirit of unity—real national unity and not merely loyalty to one's family or group. Fourth, we must have the constructive spirit that knows no tiring and builds up the state and its people from scratch.⁴²

³⁹ Ulf Sundhaussen, *The Road to Power: Indonesian Military Politics 1945-1967* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), 61-62.

⁴⁰ Ricklefs, *Modern Indonesia*, 281.

⁴¹ Sukarno, "The Crisis of Authority," in *Indonesian Political Thinking 1945-1965*, ed. Herbert Feith and Lance Castles (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1970), 76-77.

⁴² Sukarno, "The Crisis of Authority," 78.

Rather than encouraging the Indonesian masses to trust their politicians and political processes, Sukarno urged the people to find unity. This solution did not address the economic or political problems which Indonesians were facing. Focusing on the themes of anti-colonialism and unity reveals that Sukarno was trying to tap into the nationalist rhetoric and fervor which he had originally gained respect for. Sukarno clearly remained loyal to the idea of a successful and unified Indonesia, and wanted the people of the archipelago to remain on the same track.

The political parties did not heed Sukarno's call for unity. In the general election of September 1955, the number of different political parties was increased, not reduced.⁴³ The four largest parties were PNI and *Masyumi*, each receiving 57 parliamentary seats, NU, who had 45 seats, and PKI, who earned 39 seats.⁴⁴ These elected officials were not sworn in until March 20, 1956, when Ali Sastroamidjojo (March 1956-March 1957) became Prime Minister based upon a PNI-*Masyumi*-NU coalition.⁴⁵ Although this coalition represented three of the largest parties in the archipelago, the political fabric of the nation continued to fray. Nominally in alignment, the three parties were seldom able to reach an agreement on issues. According to Ricklefs, "a political impasse seemed to exist in Jakarta, with many people feeling that the constitutional system could not survive but not knowing what should follow."⁴⁶ Sukarno, also dismayed at the inability of parliament to cooperate, became an increasingly active critic of political parties and the parliamentary system. His

⁴³ Ricklefs, *Modern Indonesia*, 287.

⁴⁴ Ricklefs, *Modern Indonesia*, 287.

⁴⁵ Sundhaussen, *The Road to Power*, 94.

⁴⁶ Ricklefs, *Modern Indonesia*, 290.

response was to turn away from liberal democracy and become increasingly authoritative, in which Sukarno would be able to more easily direct the nation's politics and shape ideologies.

Sukarno felt that political parties were threatening the unity of the nation. In October 1956, Sukarno began to openly speak against the party system. In a speech presented to a meeting of youth delegates from all parties on October 28, Sukarno called the political parties a "disease" saying "there is a disease that is sometimes worse than ethnic and regional feeling! What is this disease, you ask? It is the disease of parties."⁴⁷ Placing the political parties as the central problem within Indonesia deflected the failures of the state and the Sukarno administration. Additionally, Sukarno's choice to deliver this address to youth suggests that he felt young people were more likely to reject the political parties. Sukarno told those in attendance that political parties caused people to "forever work against one another."⁴⁸ This appeal would touch the youth in attendance who had never experienced anything besides political parties. Sukarno wanted to ensure that he had the youth's favor, so that he could continue to tap into the nationalist sentiments of creating the country. The president expanded upon these ideas two days later when speaking to the Teachers' Union Congress. Speaking to the Union, Sukarno told the teachers that the "situation with respect to the party system is one of complete disruption" that needed to be "transformed entirely."⁴⁹ Sukarno presented, but did not fully explain, a proposal to

⁴⁷ Sukarno, "Let us Bury the Parties," in *Indonesian Political Thinking 1945-1965*, ed. Herbert Feith and Lance Castles (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1970), 81.

⁴⁸ Sukarno, "Let us Bury the Parties," 81.

⁴⁹ Sukarno, "Let us Bury the Parties," 82.

abandon Western style liberal democracy to embrace what he called a “guided democracy.”⁵⁰ This rejection of the Western style of democracy shows that Sukarno was blaming the structures of the state for the early difficulties of independence. This approach protected the population from being portrayed as unable to properly govern themselves and allowed for Sukarno to propose a new way forward. Sukarno mentioned the People’s Republic of China as a model for how to “build as people have in other countries” and as a rationale for transforming the party system.⁵¹ Sukarno’s decision to use China as the model for how to fix Indonesian politics reveals that he was beginning to lean towards an authoritarian style of government. It also suggests that Sukarno was dismayed at the ways which Indonesian government had been set up, something which he desperately wanted to change.

Sukarno finally expanded upon his ideas for guided democracy on February 21, 1957. In a speech delivered directly to the Indonesian people, Sukarno proposed a new form of government that would completely alter Indonesia. He began his speech pointing out that Indonesia had “never achieved stability in government,” blaming the inability of each of the failed cabinets not on Indonesia having the “the wrong system, the wrong style of government, that is...Western democracy.”⁵² Again, by placing the blame for Indonesian problems on the Western style of government rather than on Indonesia’s internal failures, Sukarno is deflecting the blame. Leaning into nationalist sentiments,

⁵⁰ Sukarno, “Let us Bury the Parties,” 82.

⁵¹ Sukarno, “Let us Bury the Parties,” 82.

⁵² Sukarno, “Saving the Republic of the Proclamation,” in *Indonesian Political Thinking 1945-1965*, ed. Herbert Feith and Lance Castles (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1970), 84.

Sukarno wanted the Indonesian population to think that it was the systems fault and not the population's fault. This would have motivated listeners to find and accept new approaches for government. Sukarno went on to call parliamentary style politics "an imported democracy, a democracy which is not Indonesian."⁵³ Sukarno wanted the masses listening to think that Western democracy was fundamentally impossible in Indonesia, a claim, which although false and based upon little evidence, was supported by the successive failures of each cabinet. His proposal to solve Indonesia's political crises included two components. The first item Sukarno proposed was to change the formation of cabinets from being coalition based to being a *Gotong Rojong* (mutual assistance) cabinet. Under this model, all political parties elected to the parliament would be given representation amongst cabinet members. Evidently, Sukarno had changed his stance on parties. Sukarno utilized strong, nationalistic rhetoric to advocate for this idea, explaining that *Gotong Rojong* provided "the purest likeness of the Indonesian spirit."⁵⁴ He also said the *Gotong Rojong* idea was "just, just because it does not discriminate, just because we simply regard ourselves as Indonesians—no more and no less."⁵⁵ By telling the country that *Gotong Rojong* was a purely Indonesian spirit, anyone who would have criticized it could also be blamed as being anti-patriotic. The second proposal put forward was the establishment of a National Council which was to provide advice to the cabinet. It was to have representatives from all "functional groups in our society."⁵⁶ The National Council was

⁵³ Sukarno, "Saving the Republic of the Proclamation," 84.

⁵⁴ Sukarno, "Saving the Republic of the Proclamation," 85.

⁵⁵ Sukarno, "Saving the Republic of the Proclamation," 86.

⁵⁶ Sukarno, "Saving the Republic of the Proclamation," 87.

intended to be “a reflection of our society, while the cabinet would be a reflection of Parliament.”⁵⁷ Sukarno’s desire for the new council to be a reflection of the society shows that he wanted the Indonesian people to feel like government supported them. Importantly, Sukarno singled out the PKI as receiving placement in both the National Council and the cabinet. Sukarno calculated that doing so would make the PKI become dependent upon his protection against the other parties, and hence amenable means of organizing mass support for himself. Sukarno used his position as president to propose a fundamental change to the character of the Indonesian nation, offering the Indonesian people something to believe in when the political systems had failed them. The idea was originally well received throughout the archipelago, including among leading politicians who were elated by Sukarno’s changed stance on political parties.

Indonesia’s political problems were not entirely solved, as growing regional tensions threatened to undermine the unity of the Republic. On March 2, 1957, the army commander for East Indonesia, Lieutenant Colonel Sumual, proclaimed martial law over his administrative region, thereby theoretically taking over all civil authority from Bali, Sulawesi, Makassar, and Maluku.⁵⁸ Sumaul charged his units with finishing the Indonesian Revolution to liberate the regions from Java’s control.⁵⁹ On March 8, the South Sumatra regional assembly voted no confidence in its governor and the army took over control in that region as well.⁶⁰ With the unity of the nation seeming to fall apart, the central army

⁵⁷ Sukarno, “Saving the Republic of the Proclamation,” 88.

⁵⁸ Sundhaussen, *The Road to Power*, 104.

⁵⁹ Sundhaussen, *The Road to Power*, 104.

⁶⁰ Ricklefs, *Modern Indonesia*, 292.

leadership in Jakarta urged Sukarno to proclaim martial law. On March 14, the Sastroamidjojo cabinet resigned, putting forward the imposition of a nationwide state of war and siege.⁶¹ Later that day, Sukarno proclaimed martial law.

As a result of Sukarno's proclamation, both he and the military were given enhanced power. In April 1957, Sukarno established a 'business cabinet' with the non-party politician Djuanda Kartawidajaja as the Prime Minister.⁶² In May, Sukarno's National Council was created, consisting of 41 representatives.⁶³ The army, under the leadership of General Nasution, was also taking steps during these months to enhance its own position. On December 13, 1957, Nasution ordered the army to seize remaining Dutch enterprises to be controlled by the military.⁶⁴ This was a crucial development, as the army now assumed the role of a major economic force with access to independent sources of funding. In Sumatra, where the dissident groups had collected, a rebel government, known as *Pēmērintah Revolusioner Republik Indonesia* (Revolutionary Government of the Indonesian Republic, PRRI) was announced on February 15, 1958.⁶⁵ With this formal declaration, Nasution ordered the air force to begin bombing PRRI installations. In early March the army began to send units to fight the PRRI on the ground. By the middle of

⁶¹ Sundhaussen, *The Road to Power*, 105.

⁶² Ricklefs, *Modern Indonesia*, 295.

⁶³ Ricklefs, *Modern Indonesia*, 296.

⁶⁴ Ricklefs, *Modern Indonesia*, 298.

⁶⁵ Sundhaussen, *The Road to Power*, 107.

summer, the PRRI was driven into the underground, causing the rebellion to be a lost cause.⁶⁶

The significance of the PRRI rebellion was that it strengthened the army and Nasution's role in Indonesian politics. The emerging political system was becoming a competition between Sukarno and the army. As a result, Sukarno began to increasingly turn towards the PKI as his primary ally against the army. It was within this context that Sukarno began to consider ways to increase his own power. On July 5, 1959, Sukarno announced that he was dissolving the business cabinet and restoring the 1945 Constitution.⁶⁷ This step meant that the executive power of the president was increased tremendously. On July 9, 1959, Sukarno established a new 'working cabinet' with himself as the Prime Minister.⁶⁸ Sukarno was now in a position to officially guide his guided democracy. It was within this context, with growing regional division and military power, that Sukarno delivered another Independence Day address in which he outlined a new ideological orthodoxy for the country.

This speech was one of the most radical addresses given by Sukarno. Sukarno used nationalist ideologies, particularly upon imagery of the revolution, calling for the revival of revolutionary fervor, saying that the spirit of the revolution had been lost, which was the primary cause for why Indonesia's politics were in turmoil. Sukarno blamed the loss of revolutionary fervor on the divisiveness of the political parties. He said "today nobody

⁶⁶ Ricklefs, *Modern Indonesia*, 300.

⁶⁷ Ricklefs, *Modern Indonesia*, 303.

⁶⁸ Ricklefs, *Modern Indonesia*, 303.

knows where those principles of the revolution are, because each and every party lays down its own principles.”⁶⁹ Sukarno told the Indonesian public that the time had come to “open a new page in the history of our Revolution, a new page in the history of our National Struggle.”⁷⁰ The revolution was an important component of the nationalist narrative and Sukarno urged the Indonesian population to think that they were still participants in an active revolution. By creating the image of an ongoing revolution, Sukarno was then able to suggest new, revolutionary means by which the Republic should move forward, including justifying the reinstatement of the 1945 Constitution. Sukarno told the Indonesian people that “everything will be retooled” to make these changes.⁷¹ One of the solutions which Sukarno put forward as the way “retool” Indonesia was to fully abandon Western style democracy. This was an idea which Sukarno had already begun spreading during his speeches in October 1956. Sukarno said that a “better fate can only come one hundred per cent when a society no longer contains capitalism and imperialism. For it is that system which like a parasite grows on our bodies.”⁷² Sukarno also blamed the concept of liberalism for the PRRI rebellion, saying that it had “originated in liberalism which allows each man to act as he likes.”⁷³ To prevent future rebellions and solve, Sukarno advocated for a “complete divorce from Western democracy” in order to embrace his ideas

⁶⁹ Sukarno, “The Rediscovery of our Revolution,” in *Political Manifesto Republic of Indonesia* (Jakarta: Indonesia Department of Information, 1959), 35.

⁷⁰ Sukarno, “The Rediscovery of our Revolution,” 27.

⁷¹ Sukarno, “The Rediscovery of our Revolution,” 50.

⁷² Sukarno, “The Rediscovery of our Revolution,” 29.

⁷³ Sukarno, “The Rediscovery of our Revolution,” 51-52.

of Guided Democracy.⁷⁴ Throughout the speech Sukarno appealed to nationalist emotions, at one point telling the population to “increase your national spirit! Raise the stimulus of your national will! Raise the stimulus of your national actions! And you, O, nation of Indonesia, will really become a tempered nation.”⁷⁵ This shows that Sukarno was still trying to appeal to the masses, even as he was beginning to take power directly under his own control. This speech, which was later named *Manipol* (*Manifesto Politik*, Political Manifesto), became the leading plan for the government. It did not replace *Pancasila* as the guiding ideology, but was seen as a way to make *Pancasila* more obtainable. *Manipol* was expanded upon in early 1960, when Sukarno added the acronym USDEK to it, which stood for the 1945 Constitution, Indonesian socialism, guided democracy, guided economy, and Indonesian identity (*Undang-undang dasar 1945, Sosialisme ala Indonesia, Demokrasi tērpimpin, Kēpribadian Indonesia*).⁷⁶

With the rejection of Western democracy and the establishment of *Manipol-USDEK*, Sukarno’s political beliefs began to shift firmly to the left.⁷⁷ Sukarno began to seek an alignment with the PKI, recognizing that the party would provide him two important things: an ally against the growing strength of the army and a way to interact with the public on a mass scale. The PKI, which was constantly trying to find protection from being banned by the army, was drawn closer to Sukarno as well. Regional

⁷⁴ Sukarno, “The Rediscovery of our Revolution,” 62.

⁷⁵ Sukarno, “The Rediscovery of our Revolution,” 85.

⁷⁶ Ricklefs, *Modern Indonesia*, 304.

⁷⁷ See Rex Mortimer, *Indonesian Communism Under Sukarno: Ideology and Politics, 1959-1965* (1974; repr., Jakarta: Equinox Publishing, 2006) for the complete account of Sukarno’s position on communism.

commanders of the army in Sumatra, Sulawesi, and Kalimantan banned and arrested local communists in August 1960, a move which was overturned by Sukarno in December of that year.⁷⁸ By the end of 1962, the PKI was able to claim over 2 million members, making it the largest communist party in any non-communist nation.⁷⁹ In the early 1960s, there was also a growing split in international communist unity growing between the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China (PRC). In 1963, the leader of the PKI, D.N. Aidit, began to move the ideological basis of the PKI to align more with the Chinese Communist Party.⁸⁰ Sukarno also began to interact more with the PRC. In November 1964, Sukarno met with Zhou Enlai in Shanghai for secret discussion whose details remain unclear.⁸¹ What is known, is that in November 1964, the PRC turned over the assets of the Bank of China in Jakarta to the Indonesian government.⁸² The Bank was believed to have been the PKI's main source of Chinese financial aid, and this move makes it clear that Sukarno was aligning his government with PKI and Beijing. Sukarno made Indonesia's alignment with the PRC clear on January 7, 1965, when he withdrew Indonesia from the United Nations.⁸³ This sent a message to the world that Indonesia was going to be cooperating within the PRC's sphere of influence. It also increased Indonesia's isolation from other Afro-Asian countries that opposed the PRC. Sundhaussen notes that within Indonesia, the army

⁷⁸ Ricklefs, *Modern Indonesia*, 306.

⁷⁹ Ricklefs, *Modern Indonesia*, 308.

⁸⁰ Mortimer, *Indonesian Communism Under Sukarno*, 353.

⁸¹ Ricklefs, *Modern Indonesia*, 315.

⁸² Ricklefs, *Modern Indonesia*, 315.

⁸³ Sundhaussen, *The Road to Power*, 189.

leadership viewed this as “a thoroughly unwelcome swing to the left since only the PKI could possibly benefit from severing ties with the community of nations.”⁸⁴ On an international level, Indonesia was beginning to look more like a communist state. Throughout these developments, Sukarno maintained that *Manipol-USDEK* ideology encouraged Indonesia to fight against Western dominance. This rationale, which had been created by Sukarno himself, prompted the Indonesian masses to largely accept the actions without consequence.

Domestically, the PKI experienced a surge of power thanks to many initiatives enacted by Sukarno. Two main groups became major targets for the Sukarno-PKI campaign: right-wing elements of the political parties and the army leadership.⁸⁵ Sukarno’s decision to leave the UN was followed by his taking action in February 1965 to suspend 21 newspapers in Jakarta which published anti-PKI sentiments.⁸⁶ In August 1965, Sukarno ordered that PNI leadership in the National Council and working cabinet who opposed cooperation with PKI, or who were known associated of anti-PKI army circles, be purged of their positions.⁸⁷ In his fifteenth Independence Day address as president of the Republic of Indonesia, Sukarno announced an anti-imperialist Jakarta-Pnom Penh-Hanoi-Beijing-Pyongyang axis and declared that Indonesia.⁸⁸ By this time the PKI claimed to have over

⁸⁴ Sundhaussen, *The Road to Power*, 189.

⁸⁵ Mortimer, *Indonesian Communism Under Sukarno*, 376.

⁸⁶ Ricklefs, *Modern Indonesia*, 316.

⁸⁷ Ricklefs, *Modern Indonesia*, 317.

⁸⁸ Mortimer, *Indonesian Communism Under Sukarno*, 376.

27 million members, although Ricklefs suggests the number is closer to 20 million.⁸⁹ It appeared to those inside and outside the archipelago that Sukarno and the PKI were leading Indonesia towards a complete communist state. Whether or not this would become a reality, we will never know, for on the night of September 30 – October 1, 1965 an attempted coup would spark the beginning of the end for Sukarno.

Sukarno emerged as the leader of the Indonesian nationalist movement during the Japanese occupation period and was further able to unite the nationalist groups with the creation of his *Pancasila*. Throughout his presidency, Sukarno continued to tap into nationalist sentiments through his calls for unity and continuing revolution. Sukarno relied upon his ability to excite and encourage the masses to resist his political adversaries. This led Sukarno to see the PKI as his greatest ally in political spheres, which ultimately led to Sukarno leading Indonesia towards international alignment with communist nations. The close connection with PKI would ultimately lead to Sukarno's downfall when the army blamed the communist organization for an attempted military coup. This paved the way for the rise of Indonesia's second president, Suharto.

⁸⁹ Ricklefs, *Modern Indonesia*, 317.

Chapter Three: Suharto's Reign: *Pancasila* as Authoritarian Politics

Indonesian politics in the final three decades of the twentieth century were dominated by one man: Suharto. Suharto's priorities were quite different than Sukarno, who, as we have seen, rule by appealing to the masses utilizing nationalist rhetoric that focused on unity, revolution, and rejection of Western superiority. While there were certainly similarities between Sukarno and Suharto's style of rule, we shall see that Suharto from the beginning was much more authoritarian and militant. Suharto manipulated nationalist ideologies, particularly the *Pancasila*, to justify his reign.

The circumstances which drove Sukarno out of office and pushed Suharto towards a position of power are messy, with many of the finer details still eluding historians. Suharto's takeover of power has been described by Roosa as a "creeping coup d'état."¹ The immediate trigger occurred during the early hours of October 1, 1965. Early that morning, six senior Indonesian army general and one lieutenant were captured from their respective homes in Jakarta and taken to Halim Perdanakusma Air Force Base outside the city.² All seven of the men were killed, either immediately for attempting to resist capture, or upon arrival at Halim. All seven of the bodies were dumped down a decommissioned well on the base. Amongst the bodies was Lieutenant General Achmad Yani, who had replaced Nasution as the commander of the army two years earlier.³ The group of abductors was led

¹ Roosa, *Pretext for Mass Murder*, 4.

² Robinson, *The Killing Season*, 54.

³ Nasution had been amongst the intended targets of the attack, but was able to escape. The one lieutenant captured was abducted at Nasution's house in his place.

by Army Lieutenant Colonel Untung, a battalion commander for the Presidential Guard, and called itself the September 30th Movement.⁴ Just after 7:15 a.m., a statement by Untung was broadcast over the national radio station, Radio Republic Indonesia, announcing the movement had acted to safeguard President Sukarno and the nation against a planned coup by the, now deceased, generals.⁵ In addition to the abduction of the generals and the taking over of the national radio, the movement had organized roughly one thousand soldiers to occupy Merdeka Square, Jakarta's main plaza.⁶ Upon hearing of the morning's events, President Sukarno traveled to Halim on his own initiative under the auspices of being close to his presidential airplane in case he needed to flee, not knowing that it was where the movement's leaders were based.⁷ When he arrived, Sukarno was greeted by the leaders of the movement. Later in the day, the movement was joined by PKI's leader, Aidit. It is not fully known what was discussed between Sukarno and the leaders of the movement, but it is known that Sukarno never vocally gave it his support.⁸

Meanwhile, the surviving army leadership was starting to regroup and piece together the events of the night. With Yani among the captured generals, Major General Suharto assumed leadership over the army. Suharto had been appointed as the commander for the army's *Komando Strategis Angkatan Darat* (Strategic Reserve Command, *Kostrad*)

⁴ Roosa, *Pretext for Mass Murder*, 34.

⁵ Robinson, *The Killing Season*, 55.

⁶ Roosa, *Pretext for Mass Murder*, 35.

⁷ Roosa, *Pretext for Mass Murder*, 39.

⁸ Ricklefs, *Modern Indonesia*, 319.

in May 1963.⁹ Around 4 p.m., Sukarno sent word to Suharto that he was alright, had been negotiating with the September 30th Movement at Halim, and would be assuming command of the army himself.¹⁰ Suharto dismissed the president's authority and began to give orders attack the air base. At 8 p.m., via couriers, Suharto told Sukarno to leave Halim in order to avoid becoming a casualty in the upcoming combat.¹¹ An hour later, Suharto, having secured Merdeka Square and retaken Radio Republic Indonesia, announced via radio that six generals had been captured by "counter-revolutionaries," that he was now in control of the army, and would act to safeguard Sukarno from the September 30th Movement.¹² Following this announcement, all the key figures left the air force base, including Sukarno who went to the presidential residence in Bogor.¹³ Although the casualty count of October 1 had been low, the event sparked the beginning of massive changes for Indonesia.

The next several days saw the start of the erosion of Sukarno's authority and the assertion of power by the army under Suharto. On October 2, Sukarno, not wanting to seem against the central army leadership still alive, granted the Suharto full authority to restore security.¹⁴ On October 3, Sukarno issued his first public statements to the nation since the coup attempting to reassure the nation that he was still in command and issuing a call for

⁹ Roosa, *Pretext for Mass Murder*, 56; although he had been a commander of the army's Strategic Reserve Command, Suharto had mysteriously not been targeted by the September 30th Movement. This fact, combined with his subsequent rise to power, has caused many to speculate whether Suharto had a role in orchestrating the movement.

¹⁰ Ricklefs, *Modern Indonesia*, 320.

¹¹ Roosa, *Pretext for Mass Murder*, 59.

¹² Robinson, *The Killing Season*, 57.

¹³ Robinson, *The Killing Season*, 57.

¹⁴ Ricklefs, *Modern Indonesia*, 326.

calm.¹⁵ His reassurances were short lived, as later in the day the bodies of the dead officers were found in the well near Halim.¹⁶ On October 5, coinciding with Armed Forces Day, a public funeral and military procession were held for the deceased generals. On the same day, the army began to place the blame for the killings on the PKI by publishing a 130-page booklet which chronicled the events of October 1 with PKI as the mastermind.¹⁷ Newspapers and radio stations (both of which had been taken under the army's control by the end of the first week of October) began to push stories of how PKI members tortured, mutilated, and castrated the captured generals.¹⁸ The combined effect of the media's propaganda and the imagery of the military funeral procession was felt almost immediately; PKI's headquarters in Jakarta were burned down on October 8 as were the homes of the organizations leaders.¹⁹

Violence against individual members of the PKI soon began to take place across the country, but the worst massacres were in Java and Bali.²⁰ The army encouraged civilian youth groups and death squads to identify, detain, and kill and suspected members of the

¹⁵ Robinson, *The Killing Season*, 57.

¹⁶ Ricklefs, *Modern Indonesia*, 324; Robinson, *The Killing Season*, 58.

¹⁷ Roosa, *Pretext for Mass Murder*, 63.

¹⁸ Roosa, *Pretext for Mass Murder*, 63.

¹⁹ Roosa, *Pretext for Mass Murder*, 63.

²⁰ For a fullest examination of how the massacre was carried out, see Robinson, *The Killing Season*, 118-147 and Geoffrey Robinson, *The Dark Side of Paradise: Political Violence in Bali* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995), 273-303.

PKI.²¹ Suharto also sent para-commando units throughout Java to assist with the killings.²² The massacre came to an end in the first months of 1966, leaving an estimated 500,000 to one million people dead, although the exact number is unknown.²³ Another million people were estimated to have been arrested and detained for their association with PKI.²⁴ The PKI was destroyed as a political force in Indonesia. In his examination of the massacre, Robinson points out that “few, if any, of the victims were armed, and almost all those killed and detained belonged to what were at the time lawful political and social organizations. This was not a civil war. It was one of the largest and swiftest...instances of mass killing and incarceration in the twentieth century.”²⁵

Throughout the massacre, Sukarno attempted to hold onto authority while Suharto pushed for more power within the midst of this national emergency. In February 1966 Sukarno reshuffled his cabinet in an attempt to show authority.²⁶ Sukarno also made one final effort at mobilizing mass support for himself, something he had done so successfully since his formation of PNI, against the increasing strength of the army.²⁷ Meanwhile, Suharto was encouraging the public, youth in particular, to demonstrate for the official

²¹ Robinson, *The Killing Season*, 149.

²² Ricklefs, *Modern Indonesia*, 326-327.

²³ Ricklefs, *Modern Indonesia*, 327; Robinson, *The Dark Side of Paradise*, 273; Robinson, *The Killing Season*, 3.

²⁴ Robinson, *The Killing Season*, 3.

²⁵ Robinson, *The Killing Season*, 3.

²⁶ Jamie Mackie and Andrew MacIntyre, “Politics,” in *Indonesia’s New Order: The Dynamics of Socio-economic Transformation*, ed. Hal Hill (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1994), 10.

²⁷ Mackie and MacIntyre, “Politics,” 11.

banning of PKI and the establishment of a new cabinet. On March 11, 1966, Sukarno opened a cabinet meeting at Presidential Palace in Jakarta while students and unidentified troops began to surround the building.²⁸ Sukarno fled from the palace and was met later that day by three of Suharto's generals, who, in dubious circumstances, obtained Sukarno's signature granting executive authority to Suharto to facilitate the function of the government.²⁹ Although ostensibly still president, the authority which Sukarno held since proclaiming independence with Hatta in 1945 was at its end.

With complete executive power, Suharto began to overturn the remnants of guided democracy. In April 1966, Suharto announced that Indonesia would rejoin the United Nations, abandoning the Jakarta-Beijing axis which Sukarno had established.³⁰ In June 1966, Suharto convened the *Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat Sementara* (Provisional People's Consultative Assembly, MPRS), the body to which the president was responsible to under the 1945 Constitution.³¹ During the MPRS's first meeting, it demanded that Sukarno provide clarification on the immorality, corruption, and economic mismanagement of guided democracy and of his own role in the 1965 coup attempt.³² Sukarno's refusal to respond to these demands, combined with testimonies from several trials of September 30th Movement's members, began to implement Sukarno in the coup.

²⁸ Ricklefs, *Modern Indonesia*, 328.

²⁹ Mackie and MacIntyre, "Politics," 11; Ricklefs, *Modern Indonesia*, 328; Robinson, *The Killing Season*, 65.

³⁰ Ricklefs, *Modern Indonesia*, 330.

³¹ Ricklefs, *Modern Indonesia*, 330.

³² Ricklefs, *Modern Indonesia*, 330.

Many throughout the archipelago, particularly students, lawyers, and judges, were beginning to call for Sukarno himself to be put on trial.³³ With tensions mounting against Sukarno, Suharto was able to take the final steps he needed to secure political power. On March 12, 1967, the MPRS stripped Sukarno of all his powers and titles and named Suharto the acting president.³⁴ Suharto began referring to his government as the ‘New Order’ and Sukarno’s as the ‘Old Order.’ Sukarno was forced into de facto house arrest in Bogor, where he remained until his passing on June 21, 1970.

All of Sukarno’s ideological pronouncements were revoked, with the sole exception of *Pancasila*. It seems that Suharto was determined to keep *Pancasila* in order to have an ideological justification for his government’s actions. In a state address on August 16, 1970, Suharto described his initiative to fix *Pancasila* from what he believed were the serious flaws created during the Old Order. He said that:

The New Order is nothing less than an ordering of the entire life of the people, nation, and state that has returned to the pure implementation of *Pancasila* and the 1945 Constitution. We underline the word returned because the New Order was born and has grown as a reaction to and is a total correction of all the forms of deviation and corruption carried out by what has come to be known as the Old Order. The corruption of *Pancasila* and 1945 Constitution during the Old Order period had deep and far-reaching consequences; it in fact destroyed the lifeblood of the nation and state.³⁵

Suharto made it seem that the Indonesian people could trust him and his government to fix the problems of created during Sukarno’s era. It is important that Suharto mentioned the “corruption of *Pancasila*” and the constitution, as these were both important nationalist

³³ Ricklefs, *Modern Indonesia*, 332.

³⁴ Mackie and MacIntyre, “Politics,” 11; Ricklefs, *Modern Indonesia*, 332.

³⁵ Suharto, “Pancasila Democracy,” in *Indonesian Politics and Society: A Reader*, ed. David Bouchier and Vedi R. Hadiz (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003), 37.

icons. Suharto recognized the power which *Pancasila* held, and realized how important it would be to controlling the population. In the wake of the massacre, those who heard Suharto's speech would be inclined to believe him that the Old Order had destroyed the "lifeblood" of Indonesia. Suharto declined to mention or note that it was Sukarno who had originally conceived of the idea of *Pancasila*, in fact he does not mention Sukarno at all throughout the speech. Suharto placed enormous rhetorical emphasis on *Pancasila*. He told the Indonesian public that *Pancasila* was a way to "strengthen and guarantee national unity" because it "originates from an understanding of family values and mutual cooperation."³⁶ These appeals show that Suharto wanted the public to think about national unity. This is a common nationalist trend, which Sukarno had also advocated for. Suharto also emphasized the need for Indonesian society to sacrifice things when problems arise in order to have harmony within the union. Suharto said:

It would be ideal if in the implementation of *Pancasila* democracy one could always achieve balance between individual and general interests, between the interests of groups and of the nation, and between the people and the state. But if a problem arises where there is a conflict between individual interests and general interests then we must sincerely, voluntarily, and unselfishly sacrifice the relevant individual or group for that of society and the nation.³⁷

Suharto made it clear that the Indonesian people needed to be willing to work together to move forward. By highlighting unity, common good, and the idea of a family state, Suharto was appealing to nationalist sentiments. This would have attracted many of Sukarno's remaining devout followers to thinking that Suharto was advocating for similar desires. Additionally, Suharto originally established himself as the protector of "basic human and

³⁶ Suharto, "Pancasila Democracy," 38.

³⁷ Suharto, "Pancasila Democracy," 41.

democratic rights.”³⁸ This address was important for Suharto to show the people of the archipelago that he was committed to the ideas of *Pancasila* and national unity, things that had been seemingly threatened by communism. Because these themes had been closely associated with Sukarno, Suharto needed to change that so that they were associated with himself. This speech also established the ability for Suharto to easily repudiate all political ideologies and groups which it deemed inconsistent with *Pancasila*.

Suharto’s transition to complete power was almost complete. In March 1968 the MPRS convened again and elected Suharto to a five-year term as president.³⁹ Over the next several years, the New Order government followed through on its commitments to pursue a better political system for Indonesia than it had experienced under Guided Democracy. Adrian Vickers calls this time, from 1967-1974, the “honeymoon period” in Indonesian history.⁴⁰ This period was one of relative openness, in that there was freedom of the press, freedom of political choice (except for the left), and the military did not yet dominate all aspects of government. It was a time of “great optimism and rejuvenation of Indonesia’s social, cultural, and education life” after the difficulties of the later Sukarno years and the widespread killings.⁴¹ The economy was also beginning to improve, particularly due to an oil boom in the archipelago. In 1969, oil production grew 15 percent, and another 20

³⁸ Suharto, “Pancasila Democracy,” 41.

³⁹ Ricklefs, *Modern Indonesia*, 335.

⁴⁰ Adrian Vickers, “The New Order: Keeping Up Appearances,” in *Indonesia Today: Challenges of History*, ed. Grayson Lloyd and Shannon Smith (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2001), 73.

⁴¹ Mackie and MacIntyre, “Politics,” 12.

percent in 1970.⁴² Suharto also announced an “open door” policy for foreign investment, which quickly became dominated by Japanese and American interests.⁴³ For the first time since the winning of its independence, life for most Indonesians was improving.

While the Indonesian public was experiencing significant improvements to their daily lives, Suharto was working to ensure he would remain in power. The first step was to centralize the control of the military. In August 1967 Suharto abolished the four separate branches of the armed forces, creating a single unified military known as ABRI (*Angkatan Běrsenjata Republik Indonesia*, Indonesian Armed Forces) directly under his authority.⁴⁴ ABRI officers were appointed to posts in the bureaucracy and legislature creating an avenue by which Suharto could overshadow the civilian government.⁴⁵ A purge of Sukarno loyalists occurred throughout levels of ABRI. After consolidating the military, Suharto turned his priorities over to the political sector. In February 1970, on Suharto’s order, the government announced that all employees of the government were not allowed to join any political party besides *Golkar*, a body originally established in 1964 to coordinate army-civilian cooperative bodies.⁴⁶ This was a tremendously important move, as elections were scheduled for July 1971. The success of *Golkar* was proven when it won the elections with

⁴² Ricklefs, *Modern Indonesia*, 337.

⁴³ Mackie and MacIntyre, “Politics,” 13.

⁴⁴ Ricklefs, *Modern Indonesia*, 335.

⁴⁵ Edward Aspinall, *Opposing Suharto: Compromise, Resistance, and Regime Change in Indonesia* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005), 22.

⁴⁶ Ricklefs, *Modern Indonesia*, 338.

62.8 percent of the vote.⁴⁷ Suharto saw *Golkar*'s election triumph as a sign that political controls were a successful way to control the public. In 1973, Suharto pressured the remaining political parties of the Old Order to consolidate into two groups; the secular nationalist *Partai Demokrasi Indonesia* (Indonesian Democracy Party, PDI) and the Islamic oriented *Partai Pěrsatuan Pěmbangunan* (United Development Party, PPP).⁴⁸ In contrast to Sukarno's constant efforts to mobilize the masses, the emphasis here was on limiting popular participation in politics.

It was becoming apparent that the common good which Suharto had promised to uphold in his August 1967 speech was becoming increasingly defined by Suharto himself. In between *Golkar*'s victory in July 1971 and the reformation of the political parties in 1973, Suharto addressed a crowd at the opening of a hospital in Jakarta on January 6, 1972. In this speech, Suharto established limits on democratic rights saying "it is quite unexceptionable for there to be differences of opinion in Indonesia, as long as these remain within the limits dictated by the need to maintain democratic harmony."⁴⁹ Suharto warned that there were those "who make use of their democratic rights and use those as their masks, who use their rights to excess."⁵⁰ Suharto was telling his audience and the nation that there were proper ways to express themselves in an attempt to control how people acted.

⁴⁷ Mackie and MacIntyre, "Politics," 12.

⁴⁸ Aspinall, *Opposing Suharto*, 22.

⁴⁹ Suharto, "Democratic Rights may not be used as Masks," in *Indonesian Politics and Society: A Reader*, ed. David Bourchier and Vedi R. Hadiz (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003), 50.

⁵⁰ Suharto, "Democratic Rights may not be used as Masks," 54.

Throughout the speech, Suharto continued to rely upon nationalist rhetoric that called for Indonesians to see themselves as fighting towards a common goal. He said that:

There are limits to differences of opinion. The limits are set by the need for democracy to be in harmony with the calling of our struggle. The calling of our present struggle is to develop, to give content to independence. For development, political and economic stability are essential. And political stability requires order and security.⁵¹

Suharto's message in this speech about the suppression of democratic rights was leaning towards authoritarian, but his rhetoric espoused the need for Indonesians to work together in a common struggle. Suharto's presented democratic differences as a threat to Indonesian independence, something that would struck with many Indonesians who had heard the speeches of Sukarno. This was an attempt by Suharto to appear loyal to the Indonesian population at the same time that he was actively working to exploit them for political purposes.

Political tensions heightened between the New Order's original supporters and the government following *Golkar's* victory, Suharto's subtle threats towards those who opposed his ideas of democracy, and the simplification of political parties. In late 1973, students began to stage antigovernment demonstrations.⁵² Tensions reached a peak in January 1974, when Japan's Prime Minister Tanaka Kakuei visited Jakarta. Japan had received the majority of Indonesia's exports in 1973, 53 percent, including 71 percent of Indonesia's oil, and was becoming the dominant investor in Indonesian manufacturing

⁵¹ Suharto, "Democratic Rights may not be used as Masks," 54.

⁵² Edward Aspinall, "Indonesia: Moral Force Politics and the Struggle Against Authoritarianism," in *Student Activism in Asia: Between Protest and Powerlessness*, ed. Meredith L. Weiss and Edward Aspinall (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012), 160.

industries.⁵³ As a result, many believed that Suharto was helping Japan engage in neo-colonization of the archipelago. When Prime Minister Tanaka visited the Indonesian capital, students and other youth poured into the streets burning an estimated 800 cars and 100 buildings.⁵⁴ The regime responded to the riots, known as *Malari* (January Disaster), harshly, detaining over 700 people and banning eleven newspapers who had supported the event.⁵⁵ After *Malari* the tone of Suharto's government changed dramatically. The New Order's "honeymoon period" was over; it was about to enter into what Vickers calls the "Stalinist period."⁵⁶ The decade after the *Malari* affair can, in retrospect, be seen as a defining moment in the development of the New Order political system.

This period was characterized by Suharto's ideological campaign to indoctrinate the masses according to *Pancasila*. As anti-Suharto sentiments increasingly festered following the *Malari* incident, Suharto turned to *Pancasila* to encourage ideological homogeneity. In 1978 Suharto introduced a new program known as P4 (a contraction of the full Indonesian name *Pedoman Penghayatan dan Pengalaman Pancasila*, guidelines for the implementation and experiencing of *Pancasila*) to facilitate his desire for ideological homogeneity.⁵⁷ This required all civil servants below the rank of cabinet to attend a two-week course where they were lectured solely on the importance of

⁵³ Ricklefs, *Modern Indonesia*, 340.

⁵⁴ Aspinall, "Moral Force Politics," 160.

⁵⁵ Aspinall, *Opposing Suharto*, 24.

⁵⁶ Vickers, "Keeping Up Appearances," 73.

⁵⁷ Michael Morfit, "Pancasila: The Indonesia State Ideology According to the New Order Government," *Asian Survey* 21, no. 8 (August 1981): 838, accessed September 23, 2020, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/263886>.

Pancasila.⁵⁸ By 1980, the P4 program had expanded to encompass tens of millions of Indonesian schoolchildren, university students, and businesspeople.⁵⁹ Ali Moertopo, Indonesia's Minister of Information from 1978-1983 and a staunch ally of Suharto, explained that the "purpose of the P4 program is none other than to Indonesianise Indonesians...to make Indonesians truly Indonesians. So you have not become a complete citizen until you have mastered P4."⁶⁰ Moertopo's implied that P4 courses were the only proper way for Indonesians to truly realize themselves. Therefore, anyone who had not taken the course was seen as un-Indonesian, stripping them of their national identity. A major characteristic of these courses was the elevation of village traditions where duties came before rights, the good of the public took precedence over the individual, and decisions were made by leaders.⁶¹ The Indonesian state was depicted as a village at large, exemplifying the need for the masses to sacrifice their own interests at the behest of the leader, Suharto. The president was portrayed as the protector of *Pancasila* whose interpretation of it was absolute. Therefore, anyone in disagreement with Suharto would be deemed disagreeing with *Pancasila*. As Michael Morfit notes, these courses were intended to encourage "an ideology of containment rather than one of mobilization."⁶² The

⁵⁸ Morfit, "Pancasila," 845.

⁵⁹ David Bouchier and Vedi R. Hadiz, eds., *Indonesian Politics and Society: A Reader* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003), 98.

⁶⁰ Ali Moertopo, "Indonesianising Indonesians," in *Indonesian Politics and Society: A Reader*, ed. David Bouchier and Vedi R. Hadiz (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003), 111.

⁶¹ David Bouchier, "Conservative Political Ideology in Indonesia: A Fourth Wave?," in *Indonesia Today: Challenges of History*, ed. Grayson Lloyd and Shannon Smith (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2001), 118.

⁶² Morfit, "Pancasila," 846.

P4 programs were a direct attempt to manipulate nationalistic fervor to enhance Suharto's position as undisputed leader.

Suharto grew even more obsessed with ideological purification in the 1980s. In a speech to the National Committee of Indonesian Youth on July 19, 1982, Suharto lectured repeatedly on the importance of *Pancasila*. He began by noting that *Pancasila* was not a tool to unite ideologies, but that it was the "sole ideology."⁶³ Suharto told the youth that "it is up to the younger generation whether you continue to rally around other principles" or to accept "*Pancasila* firmly in place as the fundamental ideology of the state."⁶⁴ Suharto also projected a false history onto the ideology, attempting to eclipse Sukarno's founding of it. Suharto said that Sukarno "did not create *Pancasila*, but merely dug up the pearls of wisdom left by our ancestors and then gathered together in the precepts of *Pancasila*."⁶⁵ Suharto wanted to disconnect *Pancasila* from Sukarno and make it appear as though it had been an important part of Indonesian ideology prior to 1945. Soon after this speech, Suharto followed through on his desire to make *Pancasila* the singular ideology of the nation. In 1983, Suharto introduced new legislation which required all organizations to proclaim *Pancasila* as their sole ideological foundation.⁶⁶ Any group that did not comply would be dissolved, suppressed, and banned. In doing so, Suharto created another way to suppress those who opposed his leadership. Suharto's leadership was now unchallenged.

⁶³ Suharto, "Pancasila, the Legacy of Our Ancestors," in *Indonesia Today: Challenges of History*, ed. Grayson Lloyd and Shannon Smith (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2001), 104.

⁶⁴ Suharto, "Pancasila, the Legacy of Our Ancestors," 109.

⁶⁵ Suharto, "Pancasila, the Legacy of Our Ancestors," 105.

⁶⁶ Bouchier, "Conservative Political Ideology in Indonesia," 119.

Throughout the 1980s, the New Order government became more oppressive, adopting an authoritarian stance.⁶⁷ The only group which posed a threat to Suharto's complete control was ARBI. In order to curb ARBI's strength, Suharto routinely replaced its leadership whenever he felt that they were threatening his superiority.⁶⁸ The economic growth of Indonesia during the 1970s and 1980s also led to the development of a strong middle-class which tolerated Suharto's abuses as the price to pay for their prosperity.⁶⁹ The appropriation of *Pancasila* and the P4 programs allowed Suharto to manipulate nationalistic ideologies to remain in power. Although Suharto would continue to be president until 1998, it is beyond the scope of this thesis to examine his eventual downfall.⁷⁰

⁶⁷ See Benedict Anderson, ed., *Violence and the State in Suharto's Indonesia* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001) for the best accounts of state violence in Indonesia during the New Order.

⁶⁸ Mackie and MacIntyre, "Politics," 24.

⁶⁹ Ricklefs, *Modern Indonesia*, 362.

⁷⁰ Readers are encouraged to see Stefan Eklöf, *Indonesian Politics in Crisis: The Long Fall of Suharto, 1996-98* (Copenhagen: Nordic Institute of Asian Studies Press, 1999).

Conclusion

This thesis has attempted to examine the developments of Indonesia's political history during the twentieth century by looking at the speeches of President Sukarno and President Sukarno. We have seen how nationalist groups emerged in Indonesia during the first half of the twentieth century but were unable to unify their different approaches of dealing with the Dutch colonial government. Although many of the groups shared a common goal—independence—the nationalist movement lacked a unifying ideology and strong leadership, as the leadership was easily suppressed by the colonial state. When the Japanese occupation period began in 1942, the military occupiers used Indonesia's nationalist leaders to try and gain support of the masses. Sukarno emerged as the leading nationalist figure and by the end of World War II his version of pan-Indonesian ideology was accepted. *Pancasila* would become the guiding principle which both Sukarno and Suharto based their actions upon.

This thesis has shown that throughout the twentieth century Indonesian political leaders were focused on creating a unified community that they could control. As such, Sukarno and Suharto were both able to tap into nationalist sentiments to enhance their leadership over the Indonesian archipelago. Sukarno relied upon popular nationalist movements, tapping into nationalist sentiments of the masses to create a political base that supported him. Suharto, on the other hand, used nationalist ideology to contain and restrict the ideology of the masses. Both of them relied heavily upon the ideas espoused in *Pancasila* to maintain their leadership. Since *Pancasila* continues to be the leading

ideology in modern Indonesia, understanding its historical development and usage is of immense importance.

Indonesia's political history is a case study of how political leaders used nationalism to justify their leadership and unite a large diverse population. On the surface, the ethnic, cultural, and religious differences in the archipelago might make one wonder how the country was able to work out its differences. This thesis has attempted to show how Indonesia's two most important political leaders of the twentieth century were able to unify the different identities of the country's citizens by either mobilizing the masses or suppressing different ideologies.

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